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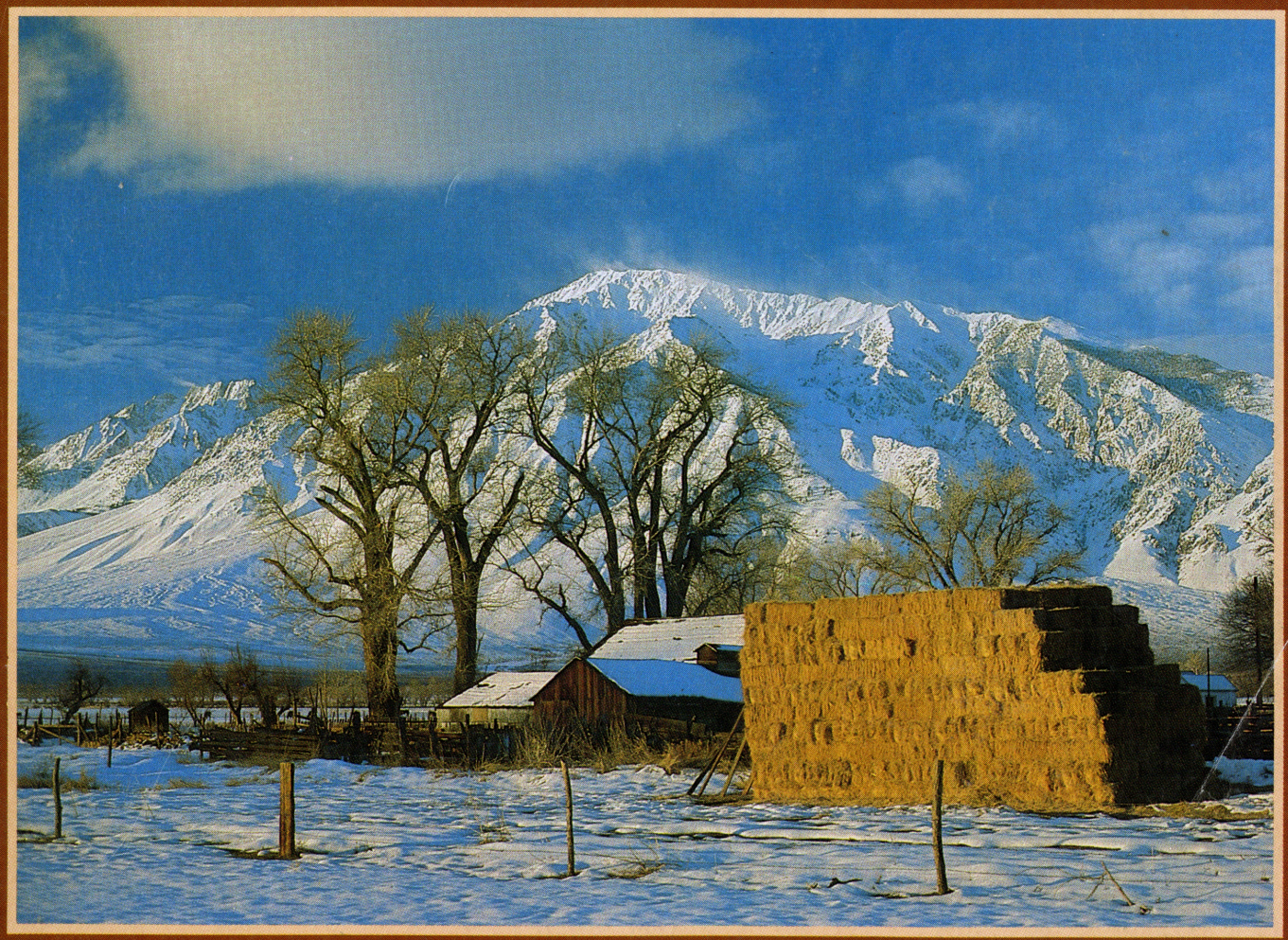
Sierra Life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HIGH SIERRA



Walter Lantz • Stalking the Sierra Zin • The Golden Eagle
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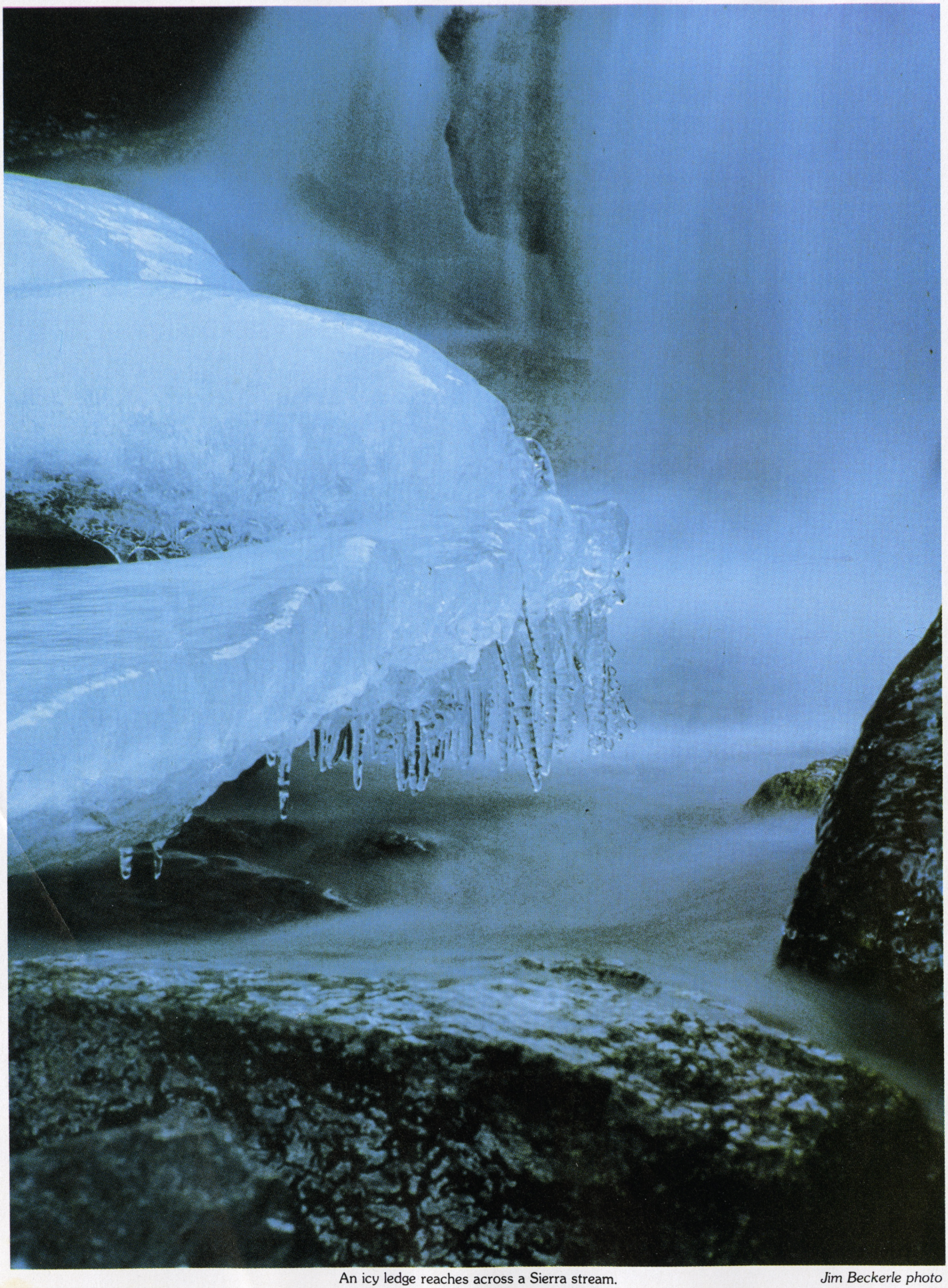


An icy ledge reaches across a Sierra stream. *Jim Beckerle photo*

From the Publisher

Someone once told me that the only things in life of any real importance are the things we can't see or touch. As I've walked, stumbled, fallen and picked myself up through life, I've found this to be a profound truth.

I like profound truths. I go through life looking for them everywhere. One thing I've discovered is that there are never half-truths—there are no areas of grey that some people use to justify their behavior. Things are either right or wrong.

Intentionally hurting another human being is wrong, whether you hurt them with harsh words or point a gun at them and pull the trigger. Something that we tend to forget is that each of us is trying equally hard to make it through this life with some sense of self-worth. Our spirits are striving for something so much more important than the things we can see or touch.

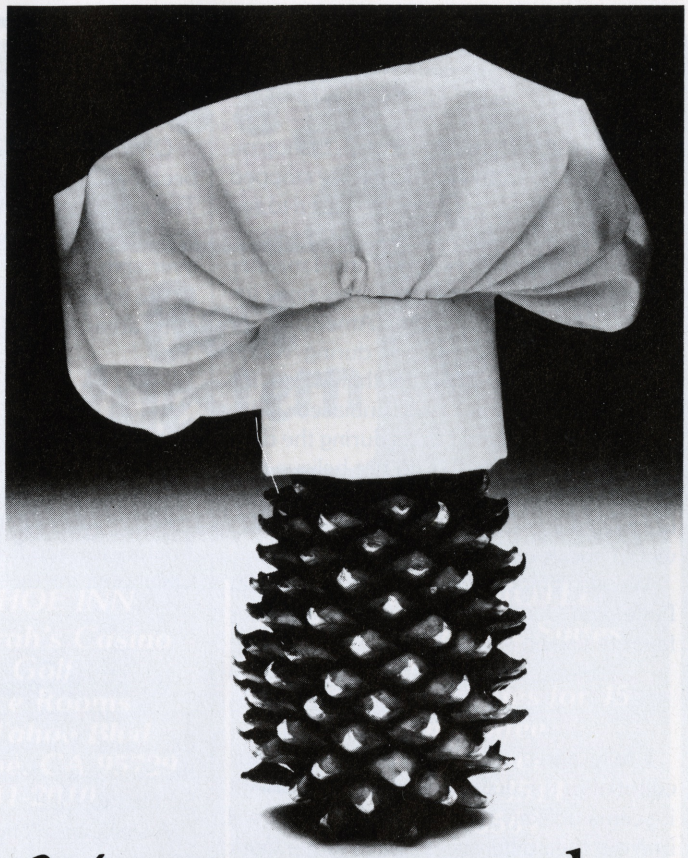
I was having lunch at a restaurant in Los Angeles recently. Halfway through my meal, a woman and her small son came in and sat near me. The little boy was about seven years old. When he spilled his glass of water, his mother immediately started shouting at him. She told him he was nothing but a worthless little brat who did nothing but cause problems for her. The more she yelled, the more her son cowered in his chair.

The glass of water spilled on the table—the thing you could see and touch—would soon be forgotten. The emotions of the mother and son would become real. Her anger. His feeling of inadequacy.

It would have been so easy for the mother to say, "Did that glass of water get in your way? Well, it happens sometimes." They could have shared a special moment that would also have become real. A spilled glass of water could have been transformed into love and trust. Instead, it generated anger and resentment.

As we go through life, let's try to remember what's really important. It's not the "spilled glass of water," it's our reaction to it. We always have a choice. We can choose hate and anger, or we can choose love and compassion.

Sandie Pramann
Publisher



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Letters to the Editor

Recently while passing through Bishop on the way home from June Lake, we stopped by Schat's Bakery and were delighted to see your magazine about the Sierra on sale.

Your article and pictures on Manzanar brought back some old memories since we were one of those many Americans of Japanese ancestry interned during World War II. We would like to thank you for printing this factual and unbiased story about what happened to us during the dark days of World War II. I do not believe that such an occurence could ever happen again because there are more people like you that would speak out against it today.

We also enjoyed your stories on Convict Lake and June Lake since they are our favorite fishing spots.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Okamura
Los Angeles, CA

I fully agree with the contents of your editorial in the July/August issue, although it seems unlikely that the world leaders will iron out their differences and together work toward building a better place for all mankind to live in. We should nevertheless never give up hope that ultimately common sense will prevail.

I truly enjoy Sierra Life and heartily compliment you and your staff for a job very well done.

Domenico G. Bonoli
Tujunga, CA

On our first visit to the High Sierra we became acquainted with your magazine. The editorial on "Manzanar" I am reprinting and handing out to many of our friends (all over sixty).

We hope to have many more vacations in your area.

Mr. and Mrs. John Kinkade
Bell, CA

My mother-in-law sent us the July/August issue and we loved it at once! My husband lived in Bridgeport until three years ago, and our two visits since have not been enough. Thanks for sending the beautiful Sierra to Oklahoma for us.

Cindy Ripley
Ponca City, OK

We had the pleasure of meeting some of your staff while in Los Angeles for the Olympics. You were so enthusiastic about the Sierra, we decided to see for ourselves. So glad we did!

A week wasn't nearly long enough though so we are already planning a month-long stay next summer. Next time we're bringing our fishing poles.

See you next July. In the meantime, keep sending us your beautiful magazine.

Mr. and Mrs. B.J. Ellis
Trenton, NJ

Ed: We knew you would love it! Stop by and see us next summer.

Your usual excellent magazine contained the "Slim Princess" article (July/August). Page 27 showed the southern terminal to be Keeler, where the turntable was located.

The actual terminus was NSP (Natural Soda Products), a mill town of approximately 200 people — exceeding that of Keeler.

The terminus was three miles southwest of the terminal. I used to walk it when required to stay after school, the reason usually being a losing disagreement with the teacher, or being "called out" for a fist fight with some other young gentleman.

Edwin Johnson
Oxnard, CA

Mary Gorman, a longtime resident of the Owens Valley, recalls clearly when the Slim Princess (July/August) got its name. It was named the Slim Princess when they added a sleeper to the train from Mojave to Owenyo. In early days, the name was never applied to the narrow gauge from Owenyo to Mina.

Enid Larson
Big Pine, CA

Ed: Thank you for the information on the Slim Princess. It is through the memories of people such as you that we are able to write factual historical articles about the Sierra.

SIERRA LIFE MAGAZINE'S

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1. All black & white entries must be submitted on 8"x 10" format. Color entries may be 8"x 10" print format or any size transparency. All transparencies must be in positive form.
2. Entries must be in by March 1, 1985 for judging. All entries must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return.
3. Employees of Sierra Life or any of its sponsors are not eligible for entry.
4. Photos may be of any subject (scenic, wildlife, action, etc.), but must be taken within the Sierra region of California.
5. A description and location must accompany each entry. Please include the type of camera and film used.

Wilson's Fast Photo in Bishop is offering discounts on processing to all contestants!

Send entries to:
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CONTEST DEADLINE — MARCH 1, 1985

Editors Corner

"SIERRA" OR "SIERRAS"

This column being an appropriate place to address controversial questions, it seemed like a good opportunity to deal with one that has involved me from time to time. The question regards whether the mountain range we in Eastern California live next to should be correctly referred to as "The Sierra" or "The Sierras."

Now that might seem like a trivial distinction, but it has caused me some turmoil over the years.

I had an ex-girlfriend once (note the designation "ex") who acquired the habit of correcting me each time I said "the Sierras," indicating that "the Sierra" was the only possible correct term. She pointed out that since the name of the entire mountain range was the Sierra Nevada, and "sierra" means "range" in Spanish, to say "the Sierras" was redundant, and cast doubt on one's intellect and breeding.

That seemed harsh, and considering other bastardizations of Spanish terms in our vocabulary, I was prompted to check a standby reference book, *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language.* It said this: *Sierra Nevada (Spanish, literally, snowy range) mountain range in Eastern California—highest peak, Mt. Whitney—also* **the Sierras.** That's it! No *"the Sierra."* When confronted with this evidence, the woman insisted the dictionary was wrong.

Later, I learned that there exists an organization whose sole purpose is to correct people who say "the Sierras." Imagine that.

Eventually, I figured out that the world is divided into two camps, people who say "Sierra" and those who say "Sierras." The main difference between the two, other than the word, is that while they are always correcting us, we pretty much leave them alone.

I have been corrected on this point occasionally, but before I can bring up Webster's Dictionary, the conversation moves on to other subjects. It seems silly to make a big deal out of it.

The matter rested, until I arrived at this publication and was informed that to say "Sierras" was wrong, and nothing but "Sierra" would ever appear in print in this magazine. Well, I have gone along with it, although inwardly I still feel aligned with the other side. In this world of bitterness and strife, I think it's important sometimes to reach a compromise in the interest of goodwill and brotherhood. I'm willing to live and let live, if they are.

M.F.

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Sierra Life

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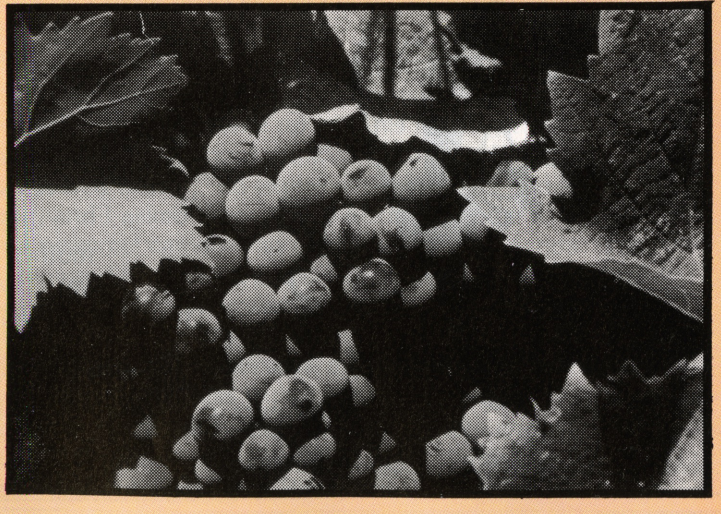

Our Cover: A snow-covered Mt. Tom overlooks the Evans Ranch north of Bishop, photograph by Mike McWherter.

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Walter Lantz

and Gracie . . . and Woody!

by Marty Forstenzer

Woody was introduced in an Andy Panda cartoon called "Knock, Knock." "When we previewed Woody Woodpecker in the first picture, he really brought down the house, and that's when I realized I had a star in the making," Walter remembers.

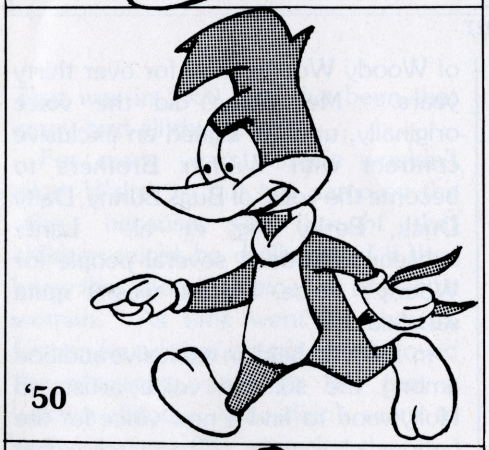
Walter Lantz and friends, clockwise from top: Woody Woodpecker, Wally Walrus, Andy Panda, Chilly Willy, Knothead, Splinter, Oswald Rabbit, Space Mouse, and Buzz Buzzard.

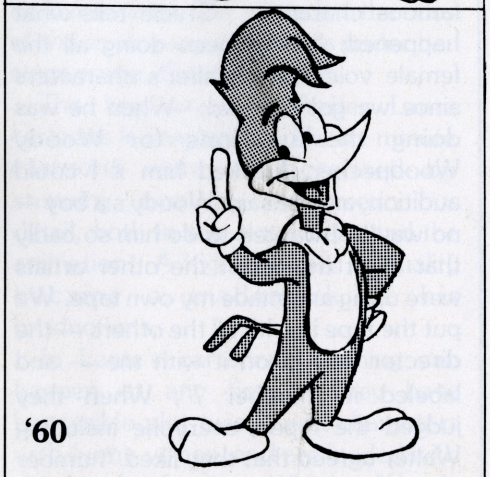
As the afternoon clouds drift over Carson Peak toward the June Lake junction, Walter Lantz sits in his snug living room overlooking Silver Lake and discusses the phenomenal popularity of his most famous creation. "I think Woody Woodpecker was so successful because there's a little of Woody in all of us," he says. "We'd all like to be able to get away with some of the things that he does." Lantz is a living legend, one of the fathers of film animation and an honored and highly respected film industry figure.

He was born in New Rochelle, New York in 1900. Because his mother died giving birth to a younger brother and his father was an invalid, Walter was supporting his family before he reached his teens, running the family grocery store in Beckley, Connecticut. At the same time, the young enterpreneur took a mail order course, his first step toward an innovative career which would be marked by enduring success.

Lantz got his first big break while working in the art department of the William Randolph

photos courtesy of © Walter Lantz





Woody Woodpecker evolved from the "gruesome looking" character in the top frame to the familiar one at bottom.

Hearst newspaper, the NEW YORK AMERICAN. In 1916, Hearst opened a film studio in New York, the Hearst Cosmopolitan Studio, and sent Walter to work for Gregory La Cava (later a famous director) in the animated cartoon department. Lantz began drawing animated cartoons of popular newspaper comic characters: The Katzenjammer Kids, Krazy Kat, Mutt and Jeff, and Happy Hooligan. After Hearst discontinued production of cartoons a few years later, Lantz got a job at New York's Bray Studios. He began drawing Bray's character Colonel Heeza Liar, and went on to produce cartoons starring his own cartoon creation, Dinky Doodle. While at Bray, the young artist devised his own process for combining animated films with live action, and appeared as an actor in many of the films himself. When the market for black and white cartoons slackened and Bray Studios closed down in 1927, Lantz headed for California.

Already a film veteran in his late 20's, Walter got a job in Hollywood with Mack Sennett, the famed producer of comedies which starred Charlie Chaplin, the Keystone Kops, Fatty Arbuckle, and a host of others. He went to work in Sennett's story department, occasionally creating animated sequences for the live comedies. One of Sennett's top story men at that time was Frank Capra, who went on to become a great feature film director, and who remains one of Walter Lantz's dearest friends.

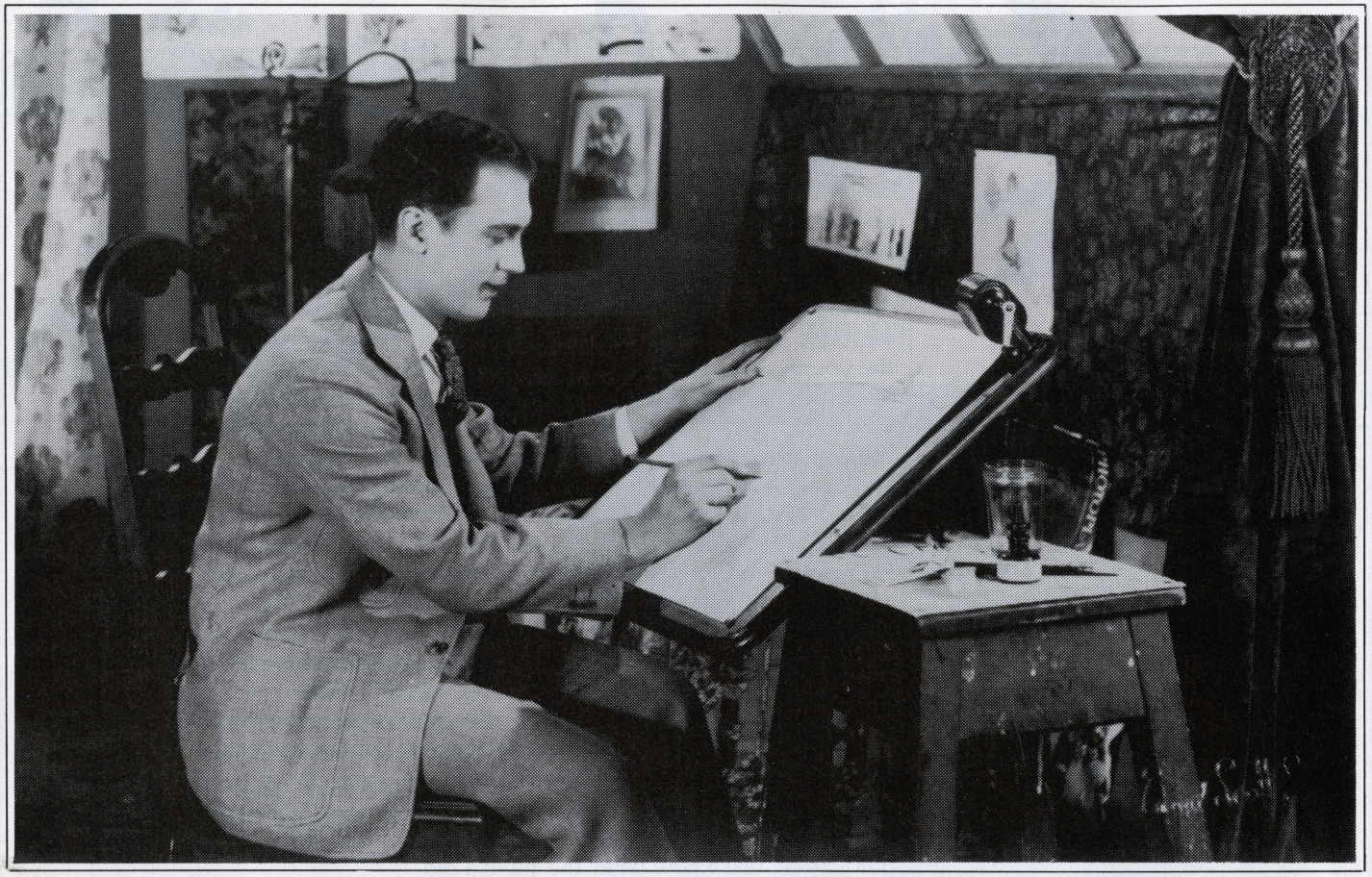
While Lantz was at Sennett, another good friend of his named Walt Disney was producing Oswald Rabbit cartoons for Universal Studios. As Lantz explains, "Walt decided he wanted to do a new character, a mouse. Universal couldn't see it at all, they said there were enough mouse characters already, it would never go. So Walt quit. Well, you know what the mouse did."

Lantz had already met Carl Laemmle, owner of Universal Studios, who was familiar with his background of producing cartoons. After Disney quit, Laemmle hired Walter to take over the Oswald Rabbit character. He put Walter on salary, and also gave him the resources to set up a film animation studio on the Universal lot. In order to satisfy Universal's demand for a new cartoon every two weeks, Lantz hired 110 people, including some of the best artists from New York.

In 1928, Lantz produced the first Technicolor cartoon, a five-minute opening sequence for Universal's first talkie, "The King of Jazz" starring Paul Whiteman. Lantz recalls, "There was a trio that Whiteman had working for him in his band called "The Rhythm Boys," and one of those singers was a kid named Bing Crosby. I said to Paul, 'There's a sequence in the opening where we have the character of a lion, and I'd like to use that young man Crosby, I like his voice.' Paul said, 'Sure, he's on salary, he'll sing whatever you want.' So, Crosby did the voice for the lion."

In 1935, Lantz formed his own production company, but continued to release his cartoons through Universal, a relationship which continues to this day. It was then that Lantz came up with his first big character. "Mrs. Harkness, the wife of the famous explorer, brought the first panda into the United States," he explains. "'Universal had a newsreel at the time, and I asked them if they would send me to the Chicago Zoo with a newsreel cameraman to photograph the panda. They said 'Sure,' so we went and filmed him, and we started making the pictures. Universal liked him very much. That was 1937, and Andy Panda became quite a famous character."

Around that time, Walter's life underwent a big change. He met Grace Stafford, a 34-year old actress with a long show business background. She was raised in Worcester, Massachusetts and started performing in vaudeville at age 12 with her father, a blind musician. Gracie later landed the lead role in "Abie's Irish Rose," and toured Australia and



The young Walter Lantz at his animation desk in 1921

New Zealand with that production. When she returned to the States, she moved to California to perform in a top stock company, later moving into radio and films. "Walter was a stage door Johnny," Gracie says. "I think he came to every opening with flowers," to which Walter adds, "Yeah, flowers with a bee in them." She and Walter were married in 1941 in Reno, and the couple honeymooned at the Boulder Lodge in June Lake on their way back to Hollywood.

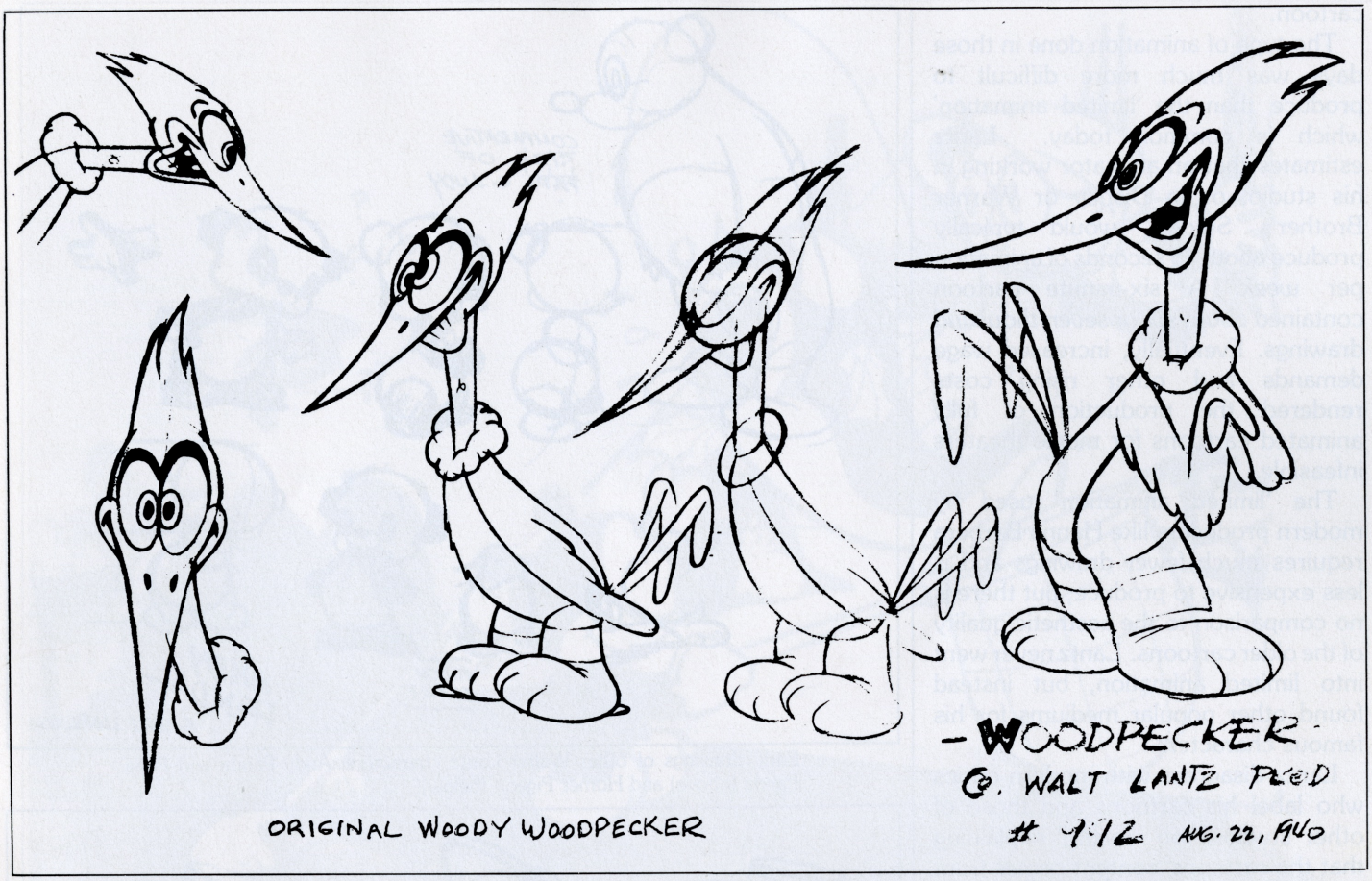
The newlyweds rented a cottage at Lake Sherwood near Los Angeles, where they first envisioned the character that was destined to peck his way into the hearts of millions. "There was a woodpecker on the roof of our cottage, and he was really a nuisance," Walter relates. "He'd peck all these holes in the roof, then he'd go off screaming — he just ruined the roof! Gracie said 'You know, you've had rabbits and dogs and cats and everything you can think of in your cartoons, but nobody's ever had a woodpecker.' I thought it would be a good idea, so I made some drawings."

The original Woody Woodpecker was a maniacal character, "gruesome looking" as Lantz describes him. He had a long bill, straight hair, and big yellow legs. Woody was introduced in an Andy Panda cartoon called "Knock, Knock." "When we previewed Woody Woodpecker in the first picture, he really brought down the house, and that's when I realized I had a star in the making," Walter remembers. "I sent the first picture back to New York, and the head of Universal's 'shorts department' said I was out of my mind, the character was so raucous and wild, he'd never go. Well, they've had about ten heads of staff there since then, and Woody is 43 years old."

Woody's success has really been phenomenal. He has appeared on everything from alarm clocks and toothbrushes to a 75-foot balloon in last year's Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. The mischievous woodpecker with the crazy laugh is famous all over the world; he is known as "Hacke Hackspett" in Sweden, "El Pajaro Loco" in Mexico, and "Pichiarello" in Italy.

Not many people are aware that Gracie Lantz has been doing the voice of Woody Woodpecker for over thirty years. Mel Blanc did the voice originally, until he signed an exclusive contract with Warner Brothers to become the voice of Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, et. al. Lantz subsequently used several people for Woody's voice, but he wasn't quite satisfied.

In 1950, he held an exclusive audition among the six top voice artists in Hollywood to find a new voice for the famous character. Gracie tells what happened: "I had been doing all the female voices for Walter's characters since we got married. When he was doing the auditions for Woody Woodpecker, I asked him if I could audition, and he said 'Woody's a boy — no way!' I wanted to do him so badly that I got the script the other artists were using and made my own tape. We put the tape in with all the others — the director was in on it with me — and labeled it "number 7". When they judged the tapes, everyone including Walter agreed that they liked "number 7" the best. I can't tell you what Walter said when he found out it was me they chose—you couldn't say it on the air.



The first "model sheet" of Woody Woodpecker

That was in 1950, and I've been that crazy bird all this time."

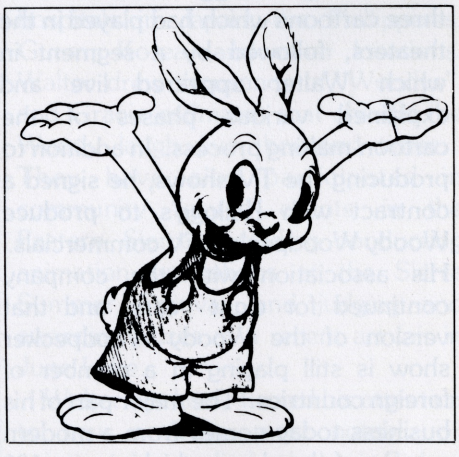
For many years, Gracie wouldn't allow Walter to put her name on the titles, because she thought that children might be disillusioned if they knew that Woody's voice was done by a woman. As time went by, though, Gracie found that people simply loved the character, and the fact that a woman did the voice didn't seem to bother anyone. She is listed on the titles of the more recent cartoons under her stage name, Grace Stafford.

The key word in Walter Lantz cartoons is imagination. His six-minute cartoons were characterized by stunning creativity and meticulous detail, both in the story ideas and the animation. A high standard of quality became a trademark of his productions.

In Lantz's cartoons, anything can happen at any time. They have impossible plot twists, wild characters with funny voices, and are loaded with word and sight gags. Whether Woody is pecking holes in Andy Panda's roof or locking the unfortunate Wally Walrus out of his own home, there are generally more gags packed into each cartoon than can be digested in one viewing.

Walter used to enjoy making an occasional "musical"—a cartoon with a musical soundtrack and little or no dialogue. "Universal had a forty-piece orchestra that did the soundtracks for their pictures," he explains. "We would go over to them when we knew they were just finishing a soundtrack, and ask them if they could just give us about six minutes of classical music. They loved to do it, it was like a jam session for them. Then, we'd take what they did, add animation and make a cartoon out of it."

Lantz had a stable of top voice artists, including Daws Butler, Dal McKennon, June Foray, and Paul Frees. He devised many of his own processes for producing top quality cartoons on a regular basis. On a typical production, the voice artists would first hold a rehearsal in which vocal details were worked out; they would then go into the recording studio and record the vocal track. The Lantz voice artists were noted for getting in and out of the studio much more quickly than other artists. After the vocal track was finished, the director would chart each syllable of dialogue, which the animators used to draw the characters in synchronization to the soundtrack. Each six-minute cartoon had its own musical score; the orchestra used the same storyboard to add the soundtrack. After the dialogue, animation, and music was complete, sound effects were added to finish the



Lantz took over Oswald Rabbit after Walt Disney left Universal to work on a "mouse"character.

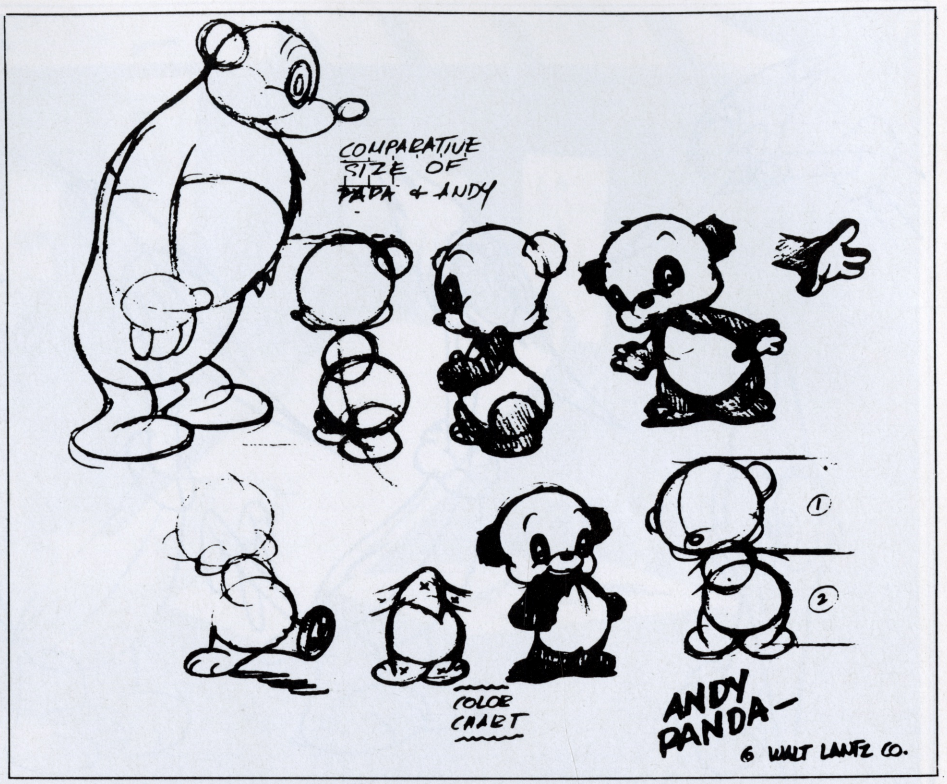
cartoon.

The type of animation done in those days was much more difficult to produce than the 'limited animation' which is common today. Lantz estimates that an animator working in his studio, or in Disney or Warner Brother's Studios, would typically produce about 15 seconds of animation per *week*. A six-minute cartoon contained about *six or seven thousand* drawings. Eventually, increased wage demands and other rising costs rendered the production of fully animated cartoons for movie theaters infeasible.

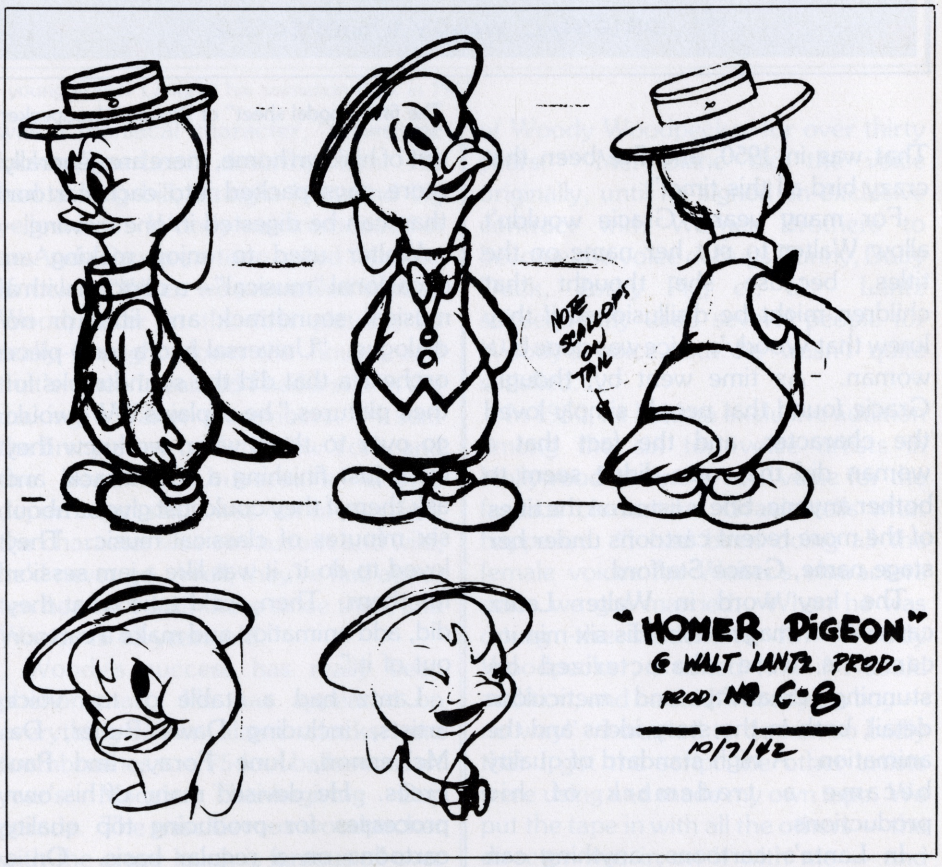
The 'limited animation' used by modern producers like Hanna Barbera requires much fewer drawings and is less expensive to produce, but there is no comparison to the aesthetic quality of the older cartoons. Lantz never went into limited animation, but instead found other popular mediums for his famous characters.

Lantz disagrees with modern critics who label his cartoons and those of other studios 'too violent,' explaining that the cartoons' content comes from an old tradition in American comedy. "You wouldn't have had the Mack Sennett comedies, or Harold Lloyd or Harry Langdon or Charlie Chaplin, without that broad slapstick comedy, with pratfalls and all of that. I had a good education in that kind of humor when I worked with Mack Sennett. I got a pretty good idea of how to get the belly laughs in the theater—you've got to have broad, wild comedy."

In 1957, Lantz turned to television, producing the first half-hour cartoon TV show for Kellogg's. It consisted of three cartoons which had played in the theaters, followed by a segment in which Walter appeared live and explained various phases of the cartoon-making process. In addition to producing the TV shows, he signed a contract with Kellogg's to produce Woody Woodpecker TV commercials. His association with the company continued for eight years, and that version of the Woody Woodpecker show is still playing in a number of foreign countries. The major part of his business today comes from a modern version of the show, which airs on 120 stations throughout the United States.

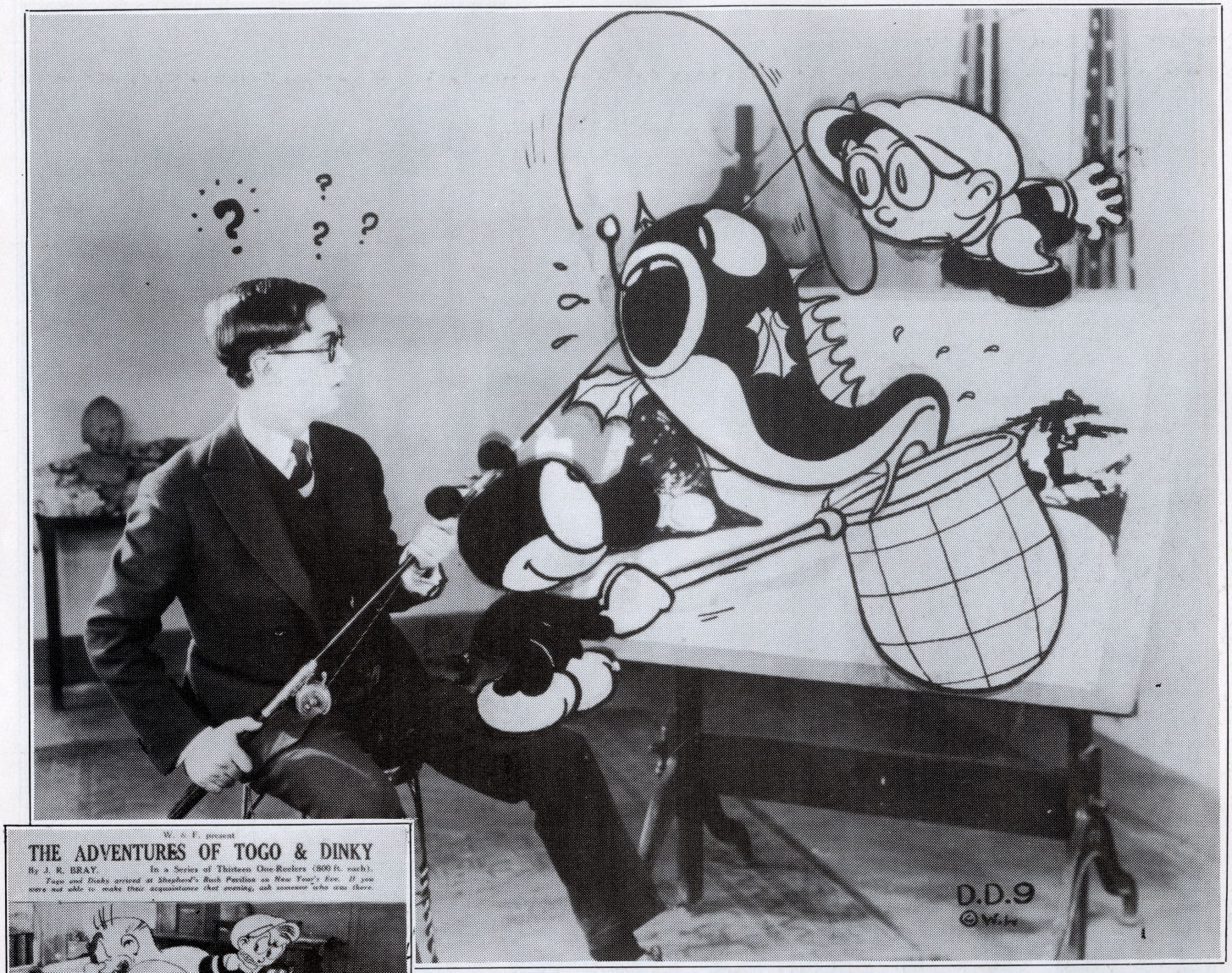


Early drawings of other Walter Lantz characters: Andy Panda and Papa Panda (above) and Homer Pigeon (below).



Walter Lantz's career in film animation was crowned in 1980 when he was awarded an Oscar for lifetime achievement by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He has also received an "Annie" — the animation industry's equivalent of an Oscar — and has been honored with retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and at Filmex, the Los Angeles film festival.

"The World of Woody Woodpecker" is an attraction on the Universal



Lantz was a pioneer of combining live action with animation. He appeared as an actor in many of his early productions at Bray Studios (above and left).

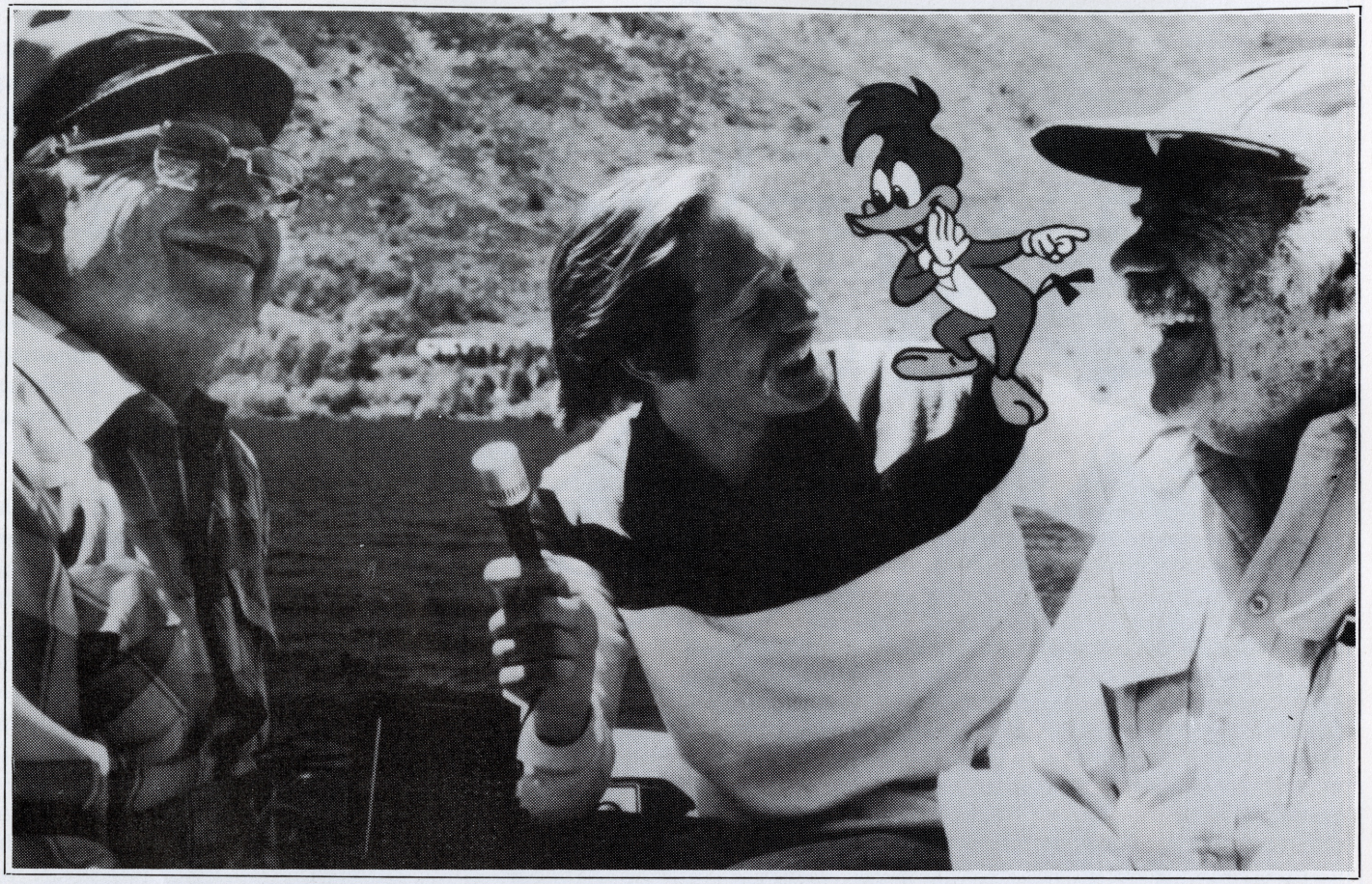
Studios Tour, and Woody is even featured in an animation display in the Smithsonian Institution. In accordance with his long-standing interest in teaching young people the secrets of film animation, Lantz recently donated to U.C.L.A. a huge body of material from his studios, including drawings, backgrounds, music scores, etc., to establish a permanent archive for the use of artists and art students.

Although the Lantzes own houses in Beverly Hills and Honolulu, their favorite home is the one on Silver Lake in the June Lake Loop. It is comfortable but not ostentatious, with an upstairs studio for oil painting, and an adjoining boat dock. Walter is a fishing enthusiast, and enjoys trolling on the lake during the day and flyfishing toward evening.

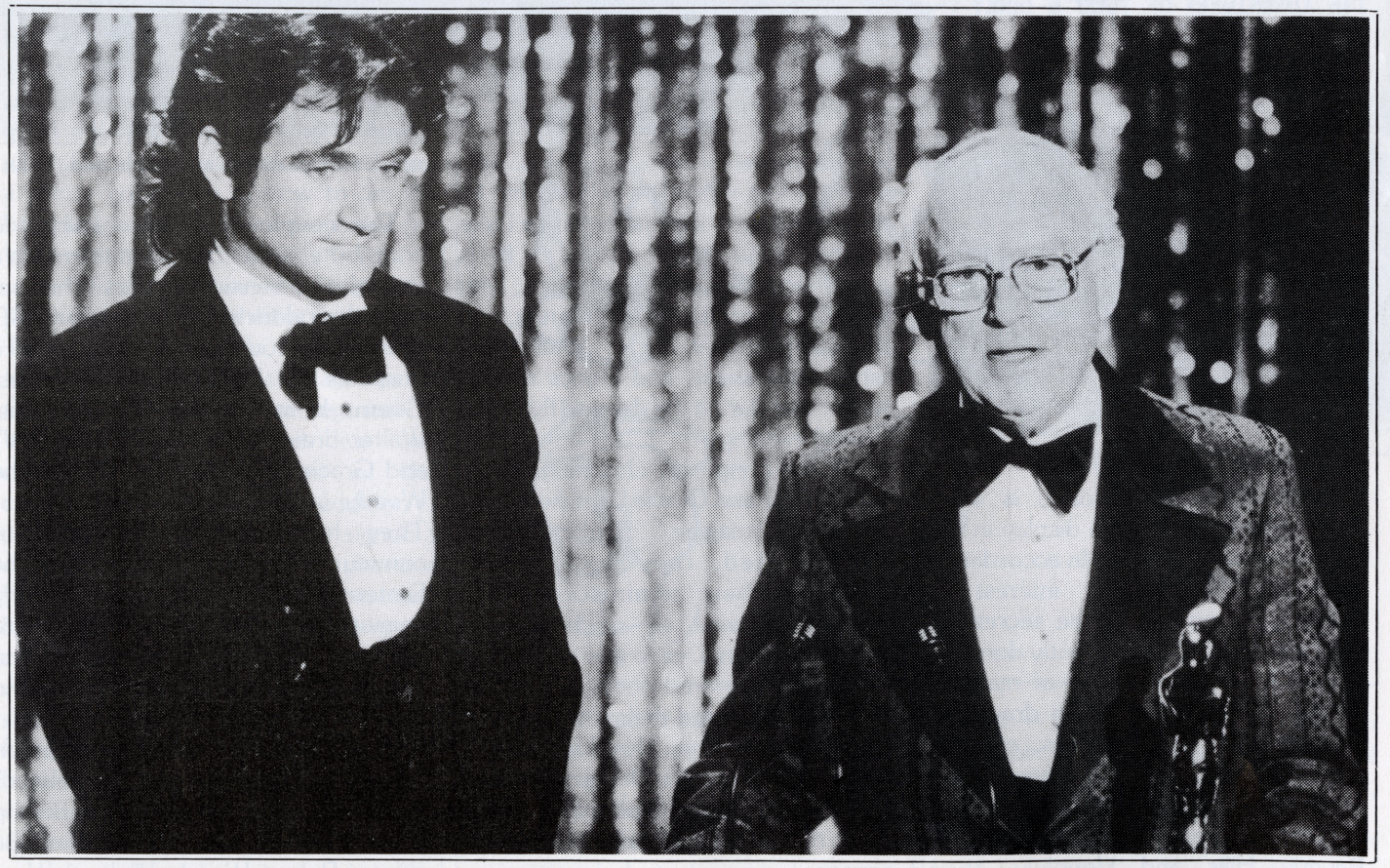
A more congenial, charming couple than Walter and Gracie Lantz would be difficult to imagine. Exuberant and warmhearted, they occasionally interrupt their reminiscences to interject praise of each other's accomplishments, or to give each other a little good natured ribbing. The pair recently celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary. When the Today Show had a St. Valentine's Day series about enduring marriages, Walter and Gracie were one of the couples chosen to appear.

The couple have been happy to contribute of their time and talents to a variety of altruistic activities. They set aside their work in 1969 to go on a USO "handshake tour", visiting U.S. service hospitals in Japan, the Phillippines, Guam, Korea, and other locations. Walter drew thousands of "Woodys", and Gracie estimates that she did the Woody laugh five thousand times. They have also participated in community related events in the Eastern Sierra, including conducting animation workshops at the Sierra Summer Festival, and judging and awarding prizes at a recent art fair in June Lake.

Walter has lately turned his attention to new projects, most notably oil painting. He studied painting in Bishop from master landscape and seascape painter Robert Wood. Walter praises



Wherever Walter is, Woody is usually nearby. At center is writer Joe Adamson, and at right, film directing great Frank Capra.



Walter Lantz accepts the 1979 Oscar for lifetime achievement from presenter Robin Williams.

Wood both as an artist and a person, and attributes much of his proficiency in oil painting to Wood's instruction.

The cartoonist began showing his paintings in Los Angeles galleries during the 70's, and they sold rather well. Then something he did as a joke delivered unexpected results. "I had a painting I had done of a bowl of apples, and just as a gag, I decided to paint Woody in," he says. "It sold for more than I ever got for a painting before—and people wanted to know where the other Woodpecker paintings were. For the next show, I made some other paintings of Woody, and they sold for even more! So I said, 'I think I've got something here.' "

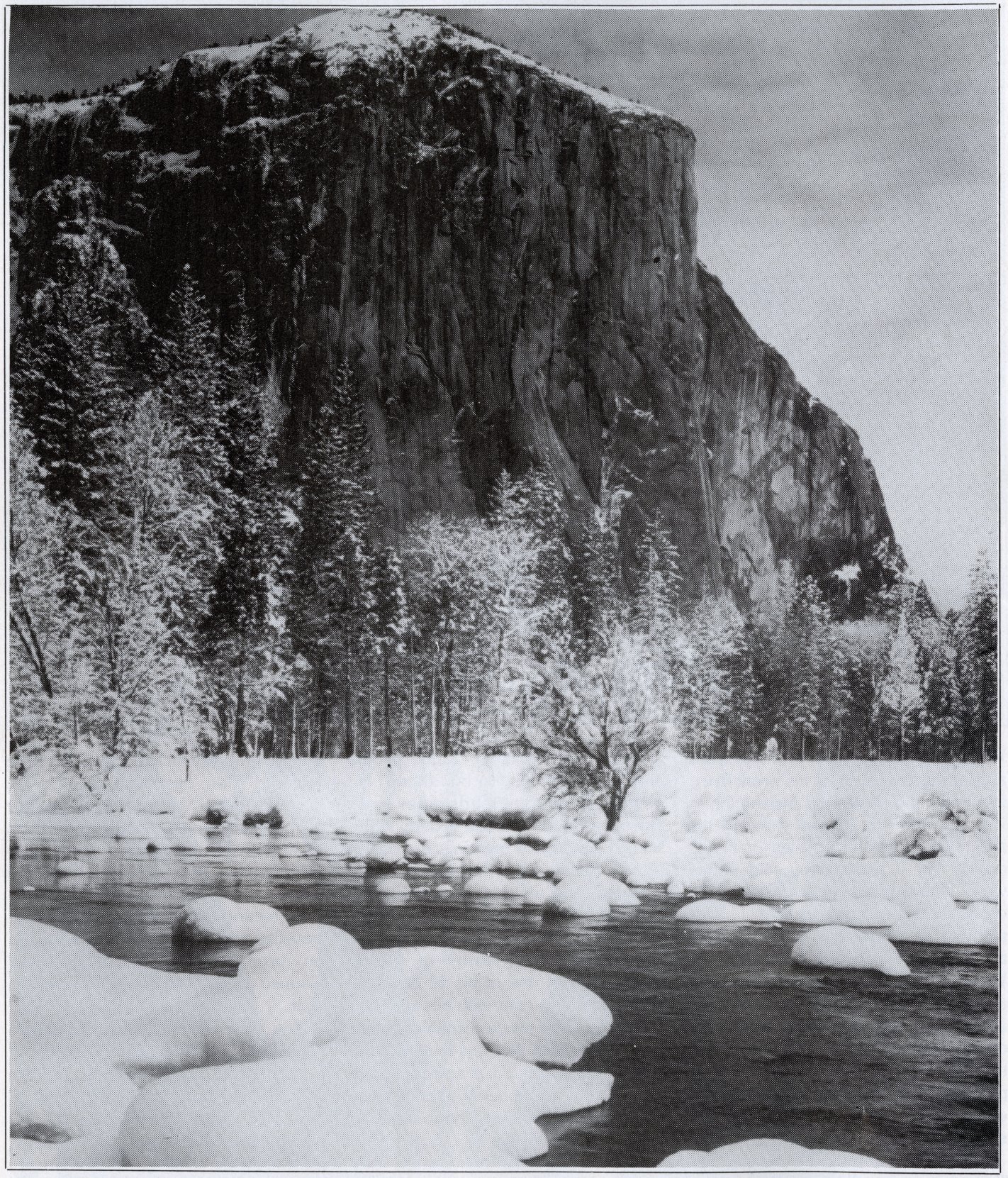
In 1979, Walter began showing his "Woody" paintings at the Center Art Gallery in Honolulu, and people mobbed the gallery to buy them. He began to paint landscapes and seascapes, and then add Woody to the scene. Among his paintings are one of Mount Rushmore with Woody's face included, and another of a swimming Woody being chased by a shark. Walter has developed a new technique, called an 'oilgraph'—a color photograph of one of his oil paintings which he paints over with oils and then laminates. This process enables him to produce enough pictures to satisfy the considerable demand, at a price anyone can afford. The money Walter receives from his oil paintings is donated to charity.

Walter has kept busy with other work. He recently completed an autobiography which is scheduled to be released soon. His latest projects are limited edition Woody Woodpecker porcelain figurines, and a limited edition of Armstrong china plates with Woody Woodpecker fired onto the front and back.

In recent years, the Lantzes have travelled to countries around the world on promotional tours. They have planned a tour of Australia for later this year.

It is always gratifying to see people whose rewards correspond with the contributions they have made; the success and good fortune of Walter and Gracie Lantz are a fitting reward for the talents they have shared with millions, and for the benevolence and generosity they continue to personify. □

WINTER IN YOSEMITE



El Capitan looms over the snow-covered valley floor. *Photo courtesy of Yosemite National Park*

Early snows on Half Dome

Tom Ross photo

The beauty of Yosemite acquires a new dimension during the snowy winter months. Although many think of Yosemite primarily during the spring and summer, the Park offers visitors a variety of winter attractions.

In December and January, the leaves of autumn are gone and the winter landscape becomes one of stark contrasts. Overcast, snowy days may be interspersed with sparkling days of unequalled radiance. Temperatures tend to be cold—daytime highs average around 50 degrees, with lows averaging around 26. Winter visitors are advised to dress for cold weather conditions.

For the patient nature watcher, Yosemite is filled with satisfying discoveries. In spite of cold temperatures and reduced food supplies, wildlife still abounds. Some species migrate to warmer climes, but many creatures remain active during winter. Among the more visible mammals active during Yosemite winters are badgers, beavers, bobcats, mule deer, red foxes, river otters, and white tailed jackrabbits. The Park's 1984 Christmas Bird Count, part of the National Audubon Society's annual holiday census of North American birds, takes place December 30. Both experienced and novice birders are welcome.

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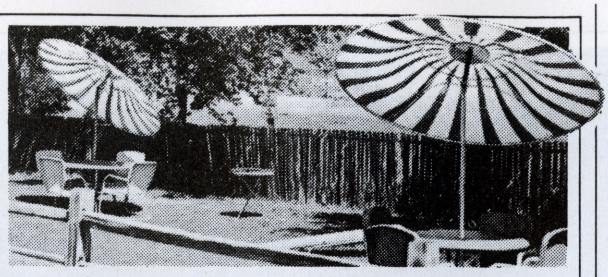

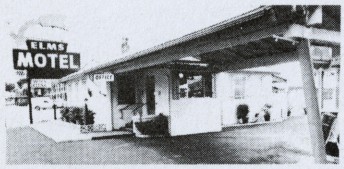

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Ski touring and snowshoeing have become increasingly popular in Yosemite. Most of the Park above the 5500 foot level is snow covered in winter and there are three main winter use areas—Crane Flat, Badger Pass, and the Mariposa Grove. In addition to these activities, Yosemite offers ice skating and Alpine skiing to visitors (see next page).

Experienced winter campers often set out from the Badger Pass area for multi-day skiing or snowshoeing trips. Another popular trip for advanced skiers and snowshoers leaves from Yosemite Valley and heads toward Tuolumne Meadows via the Snow Creek trail. There is potential avalanche hazard along this route, and users should be competent in winter backcountry travel, route finding and camping.

Yosemite offers a wide variety of cuisine, ranging from cafeterias to a formal dining room, and they all share the same special tradition of wide menu variety, comfortable atmosphere and hospitality.

The Yosemite Lodge Cafeteria features varied menu selections, and is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily.

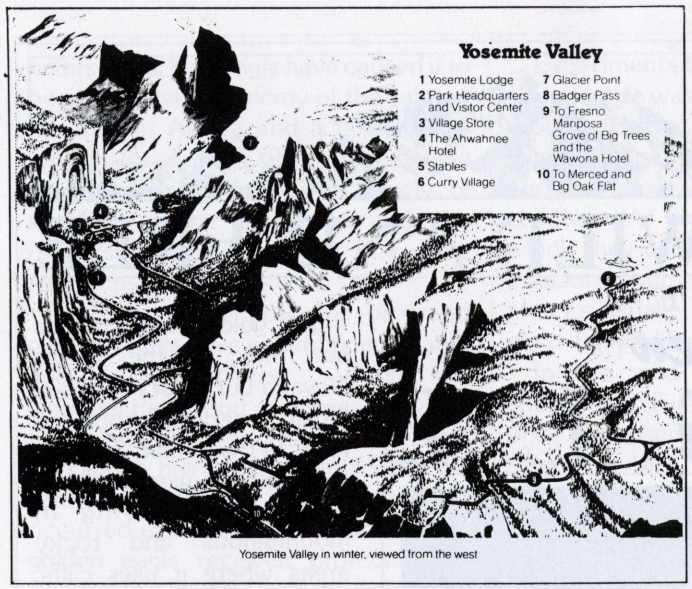
The Four Seasons Restaurant offers a relaxing family-dining atmosphere with a menu that ranges from hamburgers to prime rib.

The Mountain Room Broiler specializes in lobster and broiled steaks. The bar features an open pit fireplace and floor-to-ceiling windows.

Of course, the elegant, historic Awahnee Hotel is open to provide gourmet dining for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Evening attire is semi-formal, and dinner reservations are required.

This winter, between January 6-25, Yosemite is hosting six "Chef's Holidays." These include gourmet cooking classes and tastings of cheeses, teas, chocolates and other fine foods.

For more information or reservations, write Yosemite Park & Curry Co., Yosemite National Park, CA 93589 or call (209) 373-4171.


Yosemite Valley
1 Yosemite Lodge
2 Park Headquarters and Visitor Center
3 Village Store
4 The Ahwahnee Hotel
5 Stables
6 Curry Village
7 Glacier Point
8 Badger Pass
9 To Fresno Mariposa Grove of Big Trees and the Wawona Hotel
10 To Merced and Big Oak Flat
Yosemite Valley in winter, viewed from the west

WINTER ACTIVITIES IN YOSEMITE

ICE SKATING

Open approximately Thanksgiving to mid-March, the outdoor rink at Curry Village provides beautiful views of Half Dome and the surrounding forest from the ice. Amenities offered skaters include rental skates, a warming room with lockers, firepit and snack stand.

ALPINE SKIING (downhill)

Badger Pass, the oldest ski area in California, is located 23 miles from Yosemite Valley, with a bus that runs daily between the ski area and the Valley accommodations. A family-oriented, beginning/intermediate ski area, Badger has 4 double chair lifts and two surface lifts serving its nine runs. The renowned Yosemite Ski School offers group and private lessons daily. Other facilities at Badger include a rental shop, three food service areas, ski shop, child care services and first-aid station.

NORDIC SKIING (cross-country)

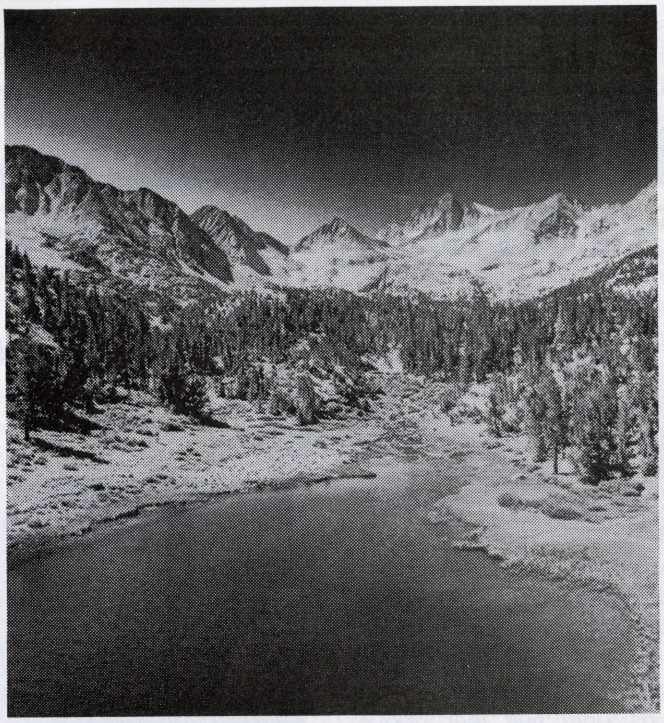
Cross-country skiing is a quiet way to enjoy the Park's beauty, and 15K of groomed track skiing and more than 90 miles of well-marked trails provide outstanding views of both the Yosemite back-country and Yosemite Valley. Lessons are scheduled daily, with rental equipment, guided tours and overnight trips available through the Yosemite Mountaineering School.

SNOWCAT TOURS

One-hour snowcat tours depart several times daily (weather and snow conditions permitting) from the Badger Pass Day Lodge for a trip along the edge of five ski runs and to the top of the ridge. The open air snowcat allows spectacular panoramic views of the Sierra Nevada horizon.

SNOWSHOEING

Snowshoeing offers access to the Yosemite back-country or a new experience for the family on an afternoon hike. National Park Service rangers lead snowshoe hikes several times each week. Snowshoes may be rented at Badger Pass and at Yosemite Mountaineering School in Yosemite Valley.



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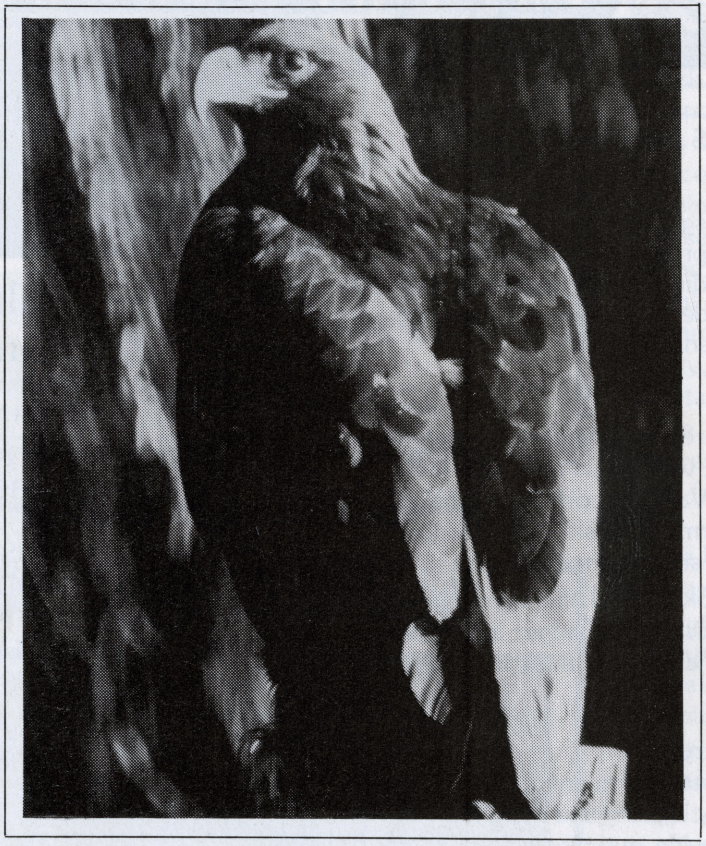
SYMBOL OF THE WILD AND FREE

THE Golden EAGLE

Text and photos by
Mike McWherter

"A Golden eagle was perched on a red fir, near Mehrten Creek, just north of the High Sierra Trail. Below him was a marmot basking in the warm sunshine. The great bird jumped from its perch, gained height with a single spiral, dove down until it was only five feet above ground, and swooped full bore onto the hapless marmot. Within the clutch of the eagle's powerful talons the marmot was killed instantly. The Golden eagle then flew off immediately to share its catch with another eagle in a tall snag." — from Natural History Files, Sequoia National Park.



Inspiring might well describe the feeling one gets when a golden eagle is seen soaring high above a mountain ridge. Displaying a majesty of flight in an almost effortless mastery of the air, it is symbolic of all that is wild and free. When seeking prey the bird is fierce, cunning, and courageous. To its mate it is faithful and to its fledglings it is a gentle and understanding provider. For all these reasons the golden eagle may also be a symbol of greatness.

In ancient times the golden eagle was used in China by Kirghiz Tatars to capture antelope. In Europe, during the height of falconry, it was flown only by kings. The American Plains Indians held the bird in high esteem and used its feathers in their headdresses and tribal ceremonies. The Romans called it the "king of birds."

Within the Sierra Nevada the golden eagle is more common on the western side than the eastern side. On the western side it is mostly seen in the foothill and Yellow Pine belts. But during summer the golden eagle can be seen soaring high over the Sierra Crest. Along the slopes of the Eastern Sierra it can be seen gliding in great circles over hills and grasslands.

The golden eagle ranges not only in the Sierra Nevada but most regions of North America, Europe and Asia. In the United States it is essentially western in its distribution, living in mountainous and rocky areas where it uses cliffs, promontories, and crags for both nesting sites and vantage points from which to watch for prey.

The golden eagle is in the family *Accipitridae* (Latin for "the fast fliers") which includes not only all eagles but many other raptorial birds: hawks, harriers, and Old-World vultures. Two of the four species of eagles in North America, the golden and bald eagles, are resident. The bald eagle is confined to North America and within California is found in a few areas of the northeast section of the state. It differs from the golden eagle in that its lower legs are naked. The legs of a golden eagle are feathered all the way to its toes. Feathered legs is a feature found in many species of eagles and this characteristic puts them in a group called the "booted eagles" or genus *Aquila* (Latin for "eagle"). The golden eagle preys primarily on rodents and the bald eagle lives off fish from rivers and large lakes. Because of this fish eating characteristic the bald eagle is classified as a "sea eagle" or genus *Haliaeetus* (Greek for "bird", probably the osprey). The bald eagle has characteristic white head feathers whereas the golden eagle has golden-brown head and neck feathers which gives it its species name, *chrysaetos* (from Greek chryso for gold). Worldwide there are eight races of golden eagles. The race which ranges the Sierra is called *canadensis*. This same race ranges over North America from Alaska and northeastern Canada south through the Appalachians to North Carolina, Tennessee and Central Mexico. We get the scientific name for the golden eagle by combining its genus, species, and race names: *Aquila chrysaetos canadensis*. The fish eating

habits of the bald eagle have caused it to be considered an enemy of the salmon fisheries in Alaska and a bounty was long in force there. The golden eagle was considered to be an enemy of ranchers in the Southwest and was once shot from airplanes in yearly roundups.

In this century both the bald and golden eagles have experienced a rapid decline in numbers. Within the National Parks and wilderness areas of the Sierra Nevada the golden eagle population has not been subject to the same destruction of habitat which has occurred elsewhere in California. The golden eagle received protection by Federal law in 1962 and the bald eagle has been protected since 1940. Although the golden eagle has fared better than the bald eagle it is estimated that only about 500 pairs of golden eagles currently nest in California.

Except for the golden eagle's golden brown head and neck feathers, adults appear entirely dark brown, even black from a distance. Immature birds are also brown except for light areas on the chin, lower throat, or upper breast and legs. Their tail has a dark terminal band and its basal two-thirds is whitish (giving rise to the local name ring-tailed eagle). The white diminishes with age. Other names for the golden eagle are mountain eagle, brown eagle, gray eagle, war eagle, and royal eagle. The size of golden eagles varies from 30 to 40 inches with a wing span of 80 to 90 inches. The females are larger than the males. They weigh from 8 to 13 pounds and have a lifespan of 25 to 30 years.

Much of the golden eagle's hunting is done while in flight. It soars at great heights making wide circles in search of prey. In Sequoia National Park it has been observed preying on marmots, squirrels, snakes, and rabbits. One was seen carrying what appeared to be the hind quarters of a fawn and another was observed feeding on a gray fox which had been killed by a car.

Eagles have been credited with having strength enough to carry prey their own weight. This is very difficult for them and only possible if they are able to take off from an elevated point such as a cliff. The weight that an eagle can carry is considerably reduced when it must rise from level ground. Experiments have shown that an 11 pound eagle was unable to rise from the ground with a 5 1/4 pound weight. Despite this inability, absurd stories persist about eagles carrying off children. At times eagles do kill prey which they cannot possibly carry, but attacks on humans are very rare. Such attacks usually are the result of their nests being disturbed.

In the wild they are difficult to approach. Two backcountry rangers once surprised a golden eagle in the Sierra on Mt. Clarence King. When they reached a ledge at 12,000 feet they came face to face with a golden eagle. The rangers and the eagle exchanged stares, after which the startled bird dove straight down the face of the mountain for more than a thousand feet.

Golden eagles mate for life but upon the death of a partner soon remate. They build a large shallow nest (6 to 8 feet across) of sticks on cliffs or tall trees and will return to it year after year. A pair of eagles establish and defend a territory around the nest. Although nesting territories vary according to conditions, the average territory defended by a pair in southern California was found to be about 36 square miles. Courtship includes some breathtaking aerial acrobatics which may continue through the entire nesting season. Egg laying in California can commence as early as January. One to four large (2.90 x 2.50 inches) white eggs, mottled with brown, are layed. The young, clad in white down, assume the dark brown juvenile plumage after about ten weeks and molt annually until the adult golden brown is acquired at four years.

Golden eagles compete with many other species of raptors for nesting sites and food. Prairie falcons, American kestrels, red-tailed hawks, and ravens have been observed nesting in close proximity to golden eagles. Each of these species has been observed harassing adult golden eagles. Generally the golden eagle does not initiate these encounters and seldom is injury done to either bird. This behavior was observed at Amphitheatre Point in Sequoia National Park when an adult golden eagle was mobbed by three ravens. The ravens departed when a Cooper's hawk showed up. The hawk would approach the eagle from behind and above and then attack. The eagle would roll on its back and defend itself with talons out front. The eagle and hawk fought for five minutes talon to talon. On another occasion a golden eagle was soaring over Amphitheatre Point when it was attacked by a red-tailed hawk. The eagle was dived upon three times before it left the area. Aggressive behavior toward other raptors nesting nearby is rarely observed in golden eagles but aggressiveness among golden eagles near an active nest is relatively common.

The golden eagle was once common throughout California, but now its numbers are reduced near human population centers. Even today a controversy exists over how much consideration should be given to the plight of the golden eagle in California. This controversy started back in the 1920's when it was reported that an "alarming decrease" in the number of golden eagles in southern California had occurred. Others countered the argument claiming that the golden eagle was doing far better than could be expected considering the enormous number of hunters and human encroachment in its nesting areas.

By 1960 it became evident that more thorough studies of the golden eagle were needed to gather information on its status for future comparative studies. This would enable researchers to recognize declines in time and take necessary measures to maintain population stability. In a 1974 study of golden eagles in California, Carl G. Thelander of San Jose State University found that areas of continuous forest have fewer nesting territories than areas of prairie grassland, oak-woodland or sage-scrub vegetation. The mountainous regions of the Sierra Nevada provide varying amounts of suitable nesting habitat and nesting territories which extend above 10,000 feet. Golden eagles have been seen over many of the Sierra's high lakes and passes. One was observed soaring high above Mt. Langley which would put it well over 14,000 feet.

Thelander found that nesting density within various areas in California was

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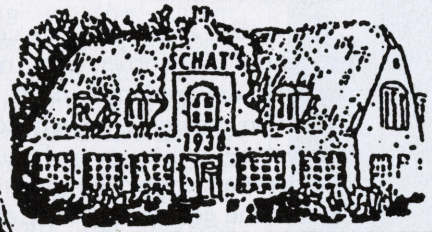

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directly related to the amount of undisturbed, natural area which provides adequate foraging areas. For example, between Los Angeles and San Diego the nesting density is low in areas of urban development. On the other hand, the sparsely inhabited oak-woodland vegetation in the coastal mountains between San Francisco and Los Angeles has relatively high nesting densities. In areas where prey and nest site availability continue to be adequate, and where human disturbance is minimal, the golden eagle may be assumed to have nesting populations approaching carrying capacities. But in those areas where human activity has included the destruction of golden eagle foraging areas, prey populations or nesting sites, permanent exclusion of nesting golden eagles has occurred. This loss of nesting territories will continue as expansion of urban areas and the alteration of golden eagle nesting habitat continues.

Much of the golden eagle's habitat in California has already been lost. Other threats are from shooting, electrocution from power lines, and disturbance at their nest sites during breeding season. But the most severe problem is continued loss of vital habitat. The golden eagle's natural densities and reproductive rates are very low. With only about 500 pairs currently nesting in all of California we must consider their needs along with our own. Truly, this king of birds is a symbol of all that remains wild and free in America. □

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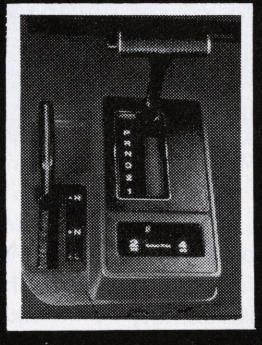

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Sierra Profile

Enid Larson in 1951

Enid Larson ENVIRONMENTAL GUARDIAN

by Marty Forstenzer

Enid Larson, who was born and grew up in the Sunland area a few miles south of Bishop, is an institution in Eastern Sierra naturalist circles. Since her return to this area in the early 1970's, she has had a major impact on many environmental policy decisions relating to the Owens Valley and points nearby. The biologist, author, and former teacher, now in her 70's, spent twenty-five years conducting a study of the Merriam's chipmunk which she has summarized in a comprehensive three-volume manuscript that is now set for publication.

Larson has earned the respect and admiration of colleagues and acquaintances. Inyo County District Attorney Buck Gibbons speaks of her "keen intelligence" and "unquestioned integrity," and says, "I've seen Enid take positions at public meetings that she knew would be unpopular, and maintain them with dignity and conviction."

California Department of Fish and Game Biologist Phil Pister, himself a noted naturalist, says, "Enid is the last of an era of great naturalists. She brought the same basic concern for wildlife that she learned at Berkeley back to the Eastern Sierra, and the area is better for her being here. I have a lot of respect for her."

Enid has a teacher's love for thoughtful, inquisitive minds, and an accompanying disdain for narrow, dogmatic ones. She has an abrupt, straightforward manner that can be disconcerting to some, particularly to those on the wrong side of an environmental issue from her. An ardent conservationist, Larson has been very active in local environmental matters. She has attended many public meetings that dealt with questions of environmental policy, and made her presence felt.

In the early 70's, she played a part in the cancellation of a proposed Cal Trans project to reroute Highway 168 (the Westgard Pass Road) when she pointed out at a public meeting that no ecological study of the area had been done, a violation of the California Environmental Quality Act. Later, she criticized a Cal Trans plan to widen Highway 395 near Rock Creek because it would have wiped out a section of Jeffrey and Yellow Pines thought to be a crucial hybridization area. After studies were done, Cal Trans not only found that the location was an important ecological one, but that a minor change in their plans would save the trees and *also* save $20,000 on the *cost* of the project.

Larson and Cal Trans have now forged a cooperative working relationship, and Cal Trans environmental planner Jack Edell says that he always solicits her opinion about the ecological ramifications of proposed projects. For example, when a section of Highway 395 north of Mammoth was recently widened to four lanes, a division was made in one stretch of the road to protect an important ecological zone entirely because of Larson's recommendations. Edell comments,"She's a wonderful person in all respects. I can't think of enough good words to say about her."

Enid's input was also a factor in the Bureau of Land Management's decision to close the Eureka Sand Dunes to motorized vehicles.

Larson opposes the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's plan for Owens Valley groundwater pumping, and has spoken before the Inyo County Board of Supervisors and other groups on the subject. The naturalist says that she "stands firmly for maintaining the natural flora and fauna of the Owens Valley," and that she has always stood for care of native plants and animals here.

Larson describes her youth growing up on an alfalfa ranch in the Sunland community as a pleasant one. "We were never bored," she says,"we didn't have time to be." Her father had attended the University of the Pacific, and kept a good library from which he would read to the children. She was raised on books like Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*, and *The Stories of Jack London*.

The natural world always held a fascination for Enid. As a young child, she could spend hours watching the activities of an ant colony. She collected pollywogs in a bucket and watched them metamorphose. "The flowers and chipmunks and insects entertained me no end," she remembers.

Every Sunday on her parent's ranch, the family had a

The Eureka Sand Dunes is one of the natural areas which Larson has helped to preserve.

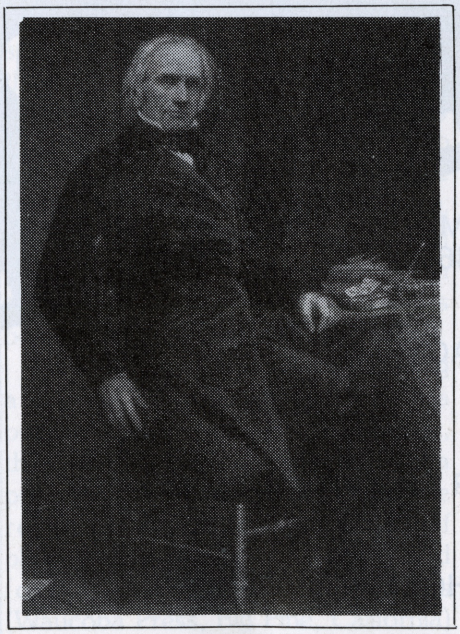
chicken and dumpling dinner, for which they used Irish linen tablecloths, Haviland china, pearl-handled knives, and coin silver. It was not only a feast day, but a time for the children to use the finest 'company manners.'

The Larsons had milk cows, made their own sausage, and baked eight loaves of bread two times a week. Because Enid disliked being cooped up in the house, she would help her father in the alfalfa fields, or work in the orchard thinning apples. She says that she knew how to hitch up a team of horses before she was ten years old.

Larson was known as 'Calamity Jane' as a child because of her propensity for mishaps. Once when her brothers were playing atop a twelve-foot haystack, little Enid was coaxed into joining them. She promptly stepped in a hole and fell to the bottom. Their father had to be called away from his milking to pull Enid out with a length of rope.

Enid remembers other incidents. "We had some black willow trees, and the kids were hanging on a limb, jumping up and down and swinging on it. I was a little afraid, but I went. Well, that limb broke off, and hit me across the nose, and I was black and blue for weeks. Thereafter, I didn't take kindly to the things they could think up to do." The first time she went fishing, she slipped on a rock and fell into Lake Sabrina. She never went fishing again.

Larson does have a few sincerely unhappy childhood memories. One of them was the relationship between the Bishop community and that of Sunland. She recalls that there was a 'social elite' in town who looked down on the people from the nearby community of Sunland as hayseeds. That stigma was hurtful to her, she says, and caused her to have an inferiority complex as a child.



One incident of her youth shocked her deeply. The Paiute Indian reservation was at that time located near Sunland, and the Indian children attended the Sunland School. When she was in the third grade, one of Larson's adult neighbors came to the school with a horsewhip and drove the Indian children off. The Indian community was forced to start a separate school for their children in Bishop. That incident gave Larson a repugnance for intolerance and injustice that stayed with her all her life.

Larson is descended from the Llewelyn-Clay-Trabue ancestral line, which also produced American statesman Henry Clay (left). She has traced her family's history in America to 1611, when John Clay arrived in Jamestown, Virginia.

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Larson left the Owens Valley in the 20's after her parents sold their ranch to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Enid says she always intended to return to the Owens Valley, and felt like an exile until her return in 1970. She attended undergraduate school in San Jose and in her junior year transferred to the University of California at Berkeley, later attending the graduate school there and receiving a Master's in Zoology. "Graduate school was wonderful," she says, "and undergraduate school was a *pain* in the *neck*. I could tell you stories about the bureaucracy there that would curl your hair!"

Larson worked her way through undergraduate school as a biological technician at Berkeley, and later worked in the same capacity at Stanford. Those were depression years, and she eventually found it necessary to prepare for a secure future, so she returned to school in the thirties to get a teaching credential.

Her first teaching job was at a high school in Oroville, the job awarded on the basis that she not insist on being supplied with a new textbook. She relates one of her early experiences at Oroville: "There was an English teacher there, Mrs. C. let's call her. She was a stilted old maid if ever I saw one, and she was an authoritarian teacher—and I was *far* from an authoritarian teacher. I tendered my resignation to the school administration, which they refused to accept. When they asked me why I wanted to leave, I said, 'Well, Mrs. C. has taught at this school for twenty-two years, and if teaching at one school for twenty-two years turns you into *that* kind of a person, I'm leaving right now for other experiences!" Despite Mrs. C., Larson continued teaching at the school for seven years.

She later moved to Carmel to teach at a high school in that coastal town. While there, she set up a 2 1/2 acre natural research area for her students, the first such area for a high school in California. Larson became famous while teaching at Carmel when Reader's Digest printed an article about her entitled, "The Teacher Who Does Not Answer Questions." The article referred to her technique of encouraging students to seek their own answers to classroom questions. She

was quoted in the article as saying, "I never answer questions that (a student) can find the answers to. I can only show the way."

While at Carmel, Larson was involved in a disagreement with the California Department of Fish and Game which almost landed her in jail. Attempting to broaden her class' background in biology, she arranged a specimen exchange with a high school in Oklahoma, sending them seashells and seaweed and requesting that they send a prairie dog skull and skin in return. Instead, the school sent a live prairie dog. Since importing a prairie dog is a violation of California Fish and Game law, the incident prompted a visit by a game warden who threatened to get a warrant for Larson's arrest. The issue was eventually settled peaceably, and the teacher got her skull and skin. A lighthearted article about the incident appeared in the Monterey newspapers.

While living in Carmel, Larson met and became friendly with attorney Francis Heisler, a political activist who was involved in a variety of libertarian causes, including the 50's movement to halt nuclear testing. Heisler was impressed upon visiting Larson's school to find the Bill of Rights posted on the door of her Biology classroom. She began working with Heisler, and attended conferences where she met chemist Linus Pauling and other notable figures. Heisler became internationally known in the 50's when he filed a lawsuit aimed at preventing nuclear testing, representing a group which included Pauling and philosopher Bertrand Russell.

Through her association with Heisler, Larson met famous scientist and author Jacob Bronowski, perhaps best known for his PBS series, "The Ascent of Man." That meeting was exciting for her because she had been deeply impressed by his book, *Science and Human Values*, and had used it in her Biology classes. She refers to Heisler, Pauling, and Bronowski as the three most brilliant men she ever had the privelege of being associated with.

Larson is a past Vice-President of the National Association of Biology Teachers. She has addressed conferences of the National Science Teacher's Association and the American Society of Mammalogists.

Enid's father and brother stacking hay on the family's Sunland alfalfa ranch, circa 1920 (above). Enid Larson today (below).

Her twenty-five year study of the Merriam's chipmunk grew directly from her education at Berkeley. Joseph Grinnell, the director of the University's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, sent J.M. Linsdale to the Carmel area to establish and maintain the Hastings Natural History Area. Larson got a job with Linsdale as a biological technician, doing slide work for the identification of plant species during her time off from teaching. Because of her fascination with chipmunks which dates to her youth in the Owens Valley, she began a study of the rodents on her own initiative. She relates: "Linsdale said that it would take me ten years to do the study, and I said 'Ten years! I can do it in three!' Well, it was twelve years before it began to fall into place and make any sense." Larson later moved her work to the nearby Palo Escrito Ranch, where much of her research was done.

Enid eventually moved from Carmel back to the Bay Area, teaching at a high school in Pleasant Hill for ten years before her return to the Owens Valley.

Enid has been involved in producing a variety of publications. She has published an environmental newsletter, the Waucoba News, for eight years as a public service at her own expense. She recently published a book of photographs of Owens Valley cloud formations called *Skyscapes* (Waucoba Press, Big Pine, California) which has been very enthusiastically received by the public. She explains in the preface that the photographs were taken while she was recovering from a bout with 'tick fever', which she contracted while doing chipmunk research on Mahogany Flat in the Panamint Mountains. She has published Part I of her 'life study' of the Merriam's chipmunk (Waucoba Press). Parts II and III are in manuscript form, awaiting publication.

Those who are concerned about protecting the environment on this side of the Sierra are thankful for the work Enid Larson has done here. Her guardianship of Eastern Sierra ecosystems has contributed much toward preserving the natural world which has existed here for millennia.

THE SECOND GREAT WILDERNESS

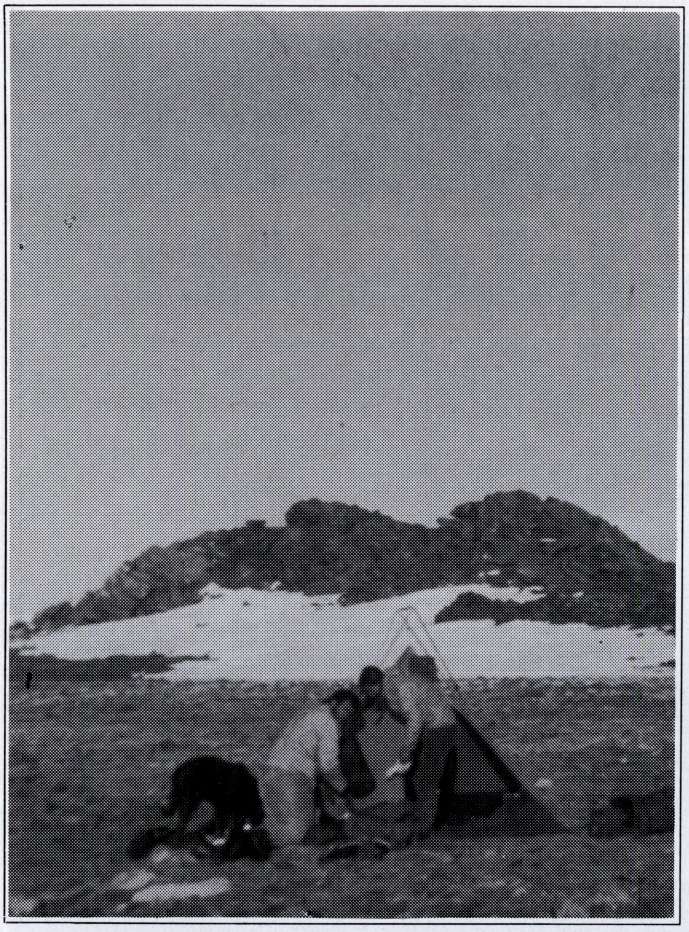
Text and photos by Hank Levine

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the goal of providing a place "...Where the earth and its community of life are untrampled by man, where man himself is a visitor. . . land retaining its primeval character and influences. . . which is protected and preserved so as to preserve its natural conditions. . . (and) has outstanding opportunities for solitude."

The beauty of the Sierra is unquestioned, but for some, the numbers of people it attracts and the human improvements that have been made in its wilderness areas detract from the "primeval character" of the land. If solitude and pristine conditions are what you are looking for, you must go where others don't. Fortunately, this can be within several minutes walk from your car in any of the numerous desert ranges, plateaus and valleys of the West.

Don't be fooled by the term 'desert.' In the western United States, deserts vary in elevation from below sea-level to over 14,000 feet. By definition, deserts receive less than 8 inches of precipitation a year, but heavy rains, hailstorms or snowstorms are all part of the desert experience. These storms may include extreme low temperatures and high winds. There are desert peaks in Nevada with winter temperatures that can be compared to temperatures on Mt. McKinley. Conditions for frostbite and heatstroke can be found within one hundred miles of each other.

The desert areas of the West are in many ways comparable to Alaska. Remoteness, vastness and temperature extremes are strongly felt in both areas. While there are no grizzly or polar bears in the deserts to set the blood racing, rattlesnakes, gila monsters and scorpions are common (although less aggressive). Also, winds are common in the desert and are bound to blow sand and dirt into your eyes, ears, mouth, food and gear; and when the winds are not blowing, a silence ensues that, because of its depth, can be both frightening and beautiful.



High desert camp in Nevada

With the exception of the more saline areas, deserts actually host a great variety of plants and animals that have evolved special adaptations to survive periods of intense cold, extreme heat, wide variations in diurnal temperatures, long periods of no precipitation and periods of heavy precipitation.

Many animals are active only during the cooler night periods, and many are adapted to obtain water directly from the plants and animals they feed on.

Some plants appear dried and dead except after periods of precipitation, when leaves and flowers suddenly appear. Others have leaves that are narrow and thin, thereby providing a smaller surface for transpiration, or else shiny leaves which do not transpire very easily. Some plants also have the ability to store water for drier periods.

Desert flower displays that may surpass most alpine meadow displays can come at surprising times. Their magnificent show of color can be seen not only in the spring, but after periods of precipitation and warm weather, regardless of season. However, not all species of flowers bloom every year. Many years the required amounts of moisture and/or the right temperature do not occur, causing most seeds to lie dormant.

Like any other true wilderness, deserts are a place in which injury may be fatal. No friendly wilderness rangers are available to call in a helicopter for your evacuation. Before starting you must carefully weigh the risk of every trip, including its difficulties and your tendencies towards boldness and clumsiness. The consequences of not doing so may be very serious.

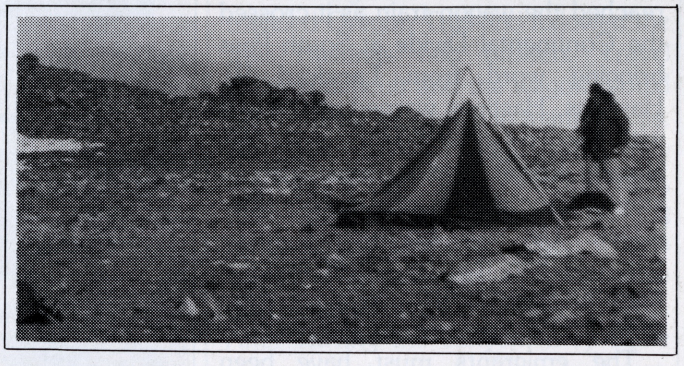
Here are a few suggestions for those people who have never been desert backpacking but are interested. Take plenty of water with you. Plan on carrying a full gallon of water per person per day. At close to eight pounds per gallon your backpacks will soon become heavy and full. A gallon of water can easily be stretched if the skies are cloudy or the temperatures are cool, but if the temperatures soar and the relative humidity drops, even one gallon per person per day won't be enough. It is a good idea for the stronger members of the party to carry a little extra group water. Many desert ranges have natural springs, but not all of these springs flow year round and many may not be good drinking. It is always a good idea to purify your water by boiling it for three minutes, but if the problem is too many of the wrong minerals, all the boiling in the world won't help. Since getting delayed for a few days for any reason can be deadly without water, take lots of it.

Tweezers are very handy while hiking at lower elevations, as they are good for removing the inevitable cactus and other thorns from your hands, arms, legs, etc. Sun protection is also very important. Caps or hats with wide, long brims, lip balm and sunscreens are essential.

The deserts offer unparalleled photographic opportunities, with vast panoramas, brilliant sunsets and fine details. Carry a camera whenever possible, but be aware that strong doses of ultra-violet light can damage film and blowing sand can foul camera mechanisms and pit lenses.

Just as important as what you take is what you leave behind—information. Tell a friend, relative or government agency where you are going and for how long, so that if you are more than one full day overdue search and rescue teams will have some idea of where to look. Three days stranded without water is nearly always fatal, and if the temperatures are high and the humidity low, dehydration will take place at a much accelerated rate.

Deserts usually have low relative humidities. While this may destroy lips and skin, decomposition of nearly everything else takes place at a very retarded rate. An orange peel left behind will last years and plastic and foil will last forever (as far as humans are concerned). So please



carry everything out with you. Also try to disturb the ground vegetation as little as possible. Ground compressed by the passing of wagons one hundred years ago still cannot hold vegetation.

Finally, a few words on where to go. Get out a map, find some vast roadless area, and go. The only places that should be avoided are areas marked on the maps as "bombing and testing ranges." □

THE DONNER PARTY

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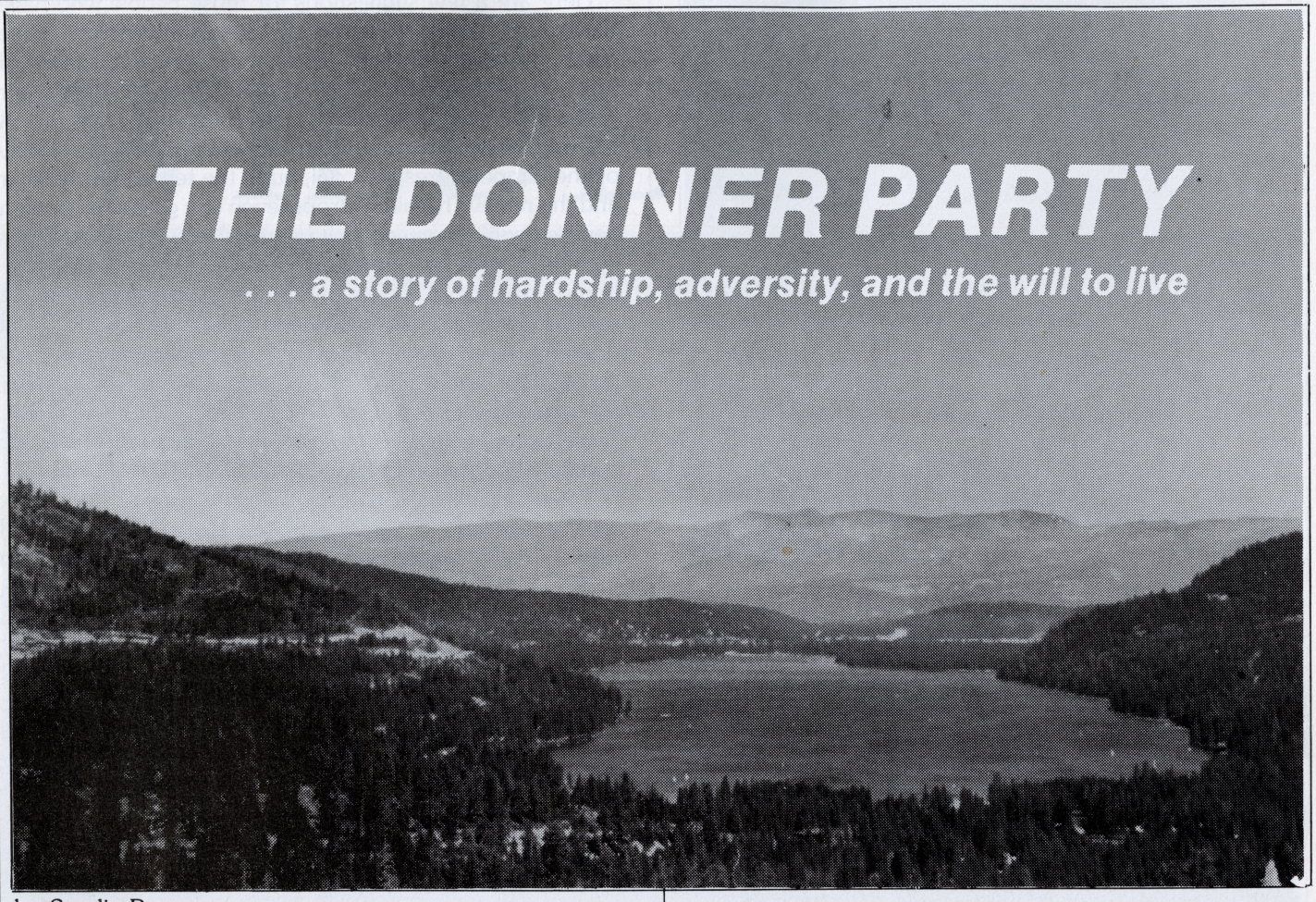

by Sandie Pramann

Winter came early to the Sierra in 1846. Cool October days gave way to freezing snow and blowing drifts on the afternoon of the 28th. By nightfall it was snowing heavily and continued for several days. This would be significant to the group of emigrants camped at Little Sandy Creek, Wyoming in July of that same year.

Before reaching the Little Sandy, the emigrants had been met by a lone messenger on horseback. He had reached the wagon train as it crossed the Continental Divide at South Pass bringing word from Lansford W. Hastings. Hastings warned of the war with Mexico (something the emigrants already knew), and advised them to stay in large groups to avoid Mexican attack. He also assured all those following him that he would wait for them at Fort Bridger and guide them safely to the Sacramento Valley.

The emigrants must have been impressed with Hastings. After all, he had accomplished so much for such a young man. He had even written a book. Many of the emigrants carried copies of this book and referred to it often as they made their way toward California.

Tamsen Donner was not impressed. At 45 years of age, she was a down-to-earth woman with a husband and children. She didn't like taking risks and, as far as she was concerned, the route that Hastings was proposing was a risk. She didn't join in on the excitement around the campfire that night. Instead, she stood gazing toward the west as the sun set. She could see the distant snow-capped mountains and began to feel a little sad and quite depressed.

And so it was, at the crossroads of the Little Sandy that the Donner Party was formed. The main wagon train headed northwest toward the known route, and the twenty wagons of the Donner Party veered southwest toward Fort Bridger and the unknown.

With the sound of whips cracking and the voices of men urging their oxen on, the wagons bumped across the dusty trail. Wagon tops, sun-bleached from weeks on the trail, shone for miles in stark contrast to the dull brown of the sagebrush plain. Women knitted contentedly while children with sun-bleached hair laughed and played inside the wagons. Just another wagon train heading west.

Around the campfire, that first night after leaving the Little Sandy, the emigrants elected a Captain for their small group. Only two men seemed qualified to fill this position; George Donner, husband of Tamsen, and James Reed.

George Donner seemed blessed with prosperity among

the emigrants. He had come West with three large wagons that were filled with symbols of his wealth. He carried plenty of food for his family and hired help, and he had brought several head of oxen, beef cattle and milch cows for his family's new start in California.

"Uncle George," as he was called in typical rural fashion, was 62 years old and the father of fifteen children. Two of his grown daughters from a previous marriage and his three daughters by Tamsen were traveling with him.

George and Tamsen were kind-hearted people, always willing to offer a helping hand where needed. They were lured to California by the tales of fair weather and the "Paradise" that awaited those who reached it.

James Reed, a close friend and associate of Donner, seemed the only rival for the position of Captain. Any rivalry between the two men was good-natured and in fun. Reed was younger than Donner by sixteen years. He was an aristocrat of sorts, coming from exiled Polish nobility. Decisive and quick to act, it was Reed who spoke in favor of trying the new cutoff they now followed. Reed's wife, three small children, stepdaughter Virginia and his hired help traveled with him.

"Uncle George" was voted Captain and Reed was satisfied with the choice. Being the good friends they were, both knew they would work together for the well-being of the group.

The Reeds, George Donners and the Jacob Donners (George's brother) had all come from Springfield, Illinois. These three families made up nine of the wagons in the train.

Mrs. Murphy headed up the largest family next to the Donners. A widow, she was traveling with her five half-grown children, her two married daughters, and their husbands, William Pike and W. Foster.

The fifth and last American family in the train was headed by William Eddy. A young man of 28, he traveled with his wife and two small children.

The other families were foreigners in the eyes of the five American families. Patrick Breen had come from Ireland and had become an American citizen just two years prior. He and his wife Peggy had seven children ranging in age from 14 down to an infant.

Most prominent among the "foreigners" was Lewis Keseberg. He had come from Westphalia two years before. In his early 30's, he was tall, blonde and quite handsome. He was probably the best educated among the emigrants. With him were his wife and two young children.

As handsome and well-educated as Keseberg was, his character was suspect. He was thought to be a wife-beater and, at one point during the early

part of the trip, he had stolen buffalo robes from an Indian burial ground. The other emigrants forced him to return the robes and, at James Reed's urging, he was banished from the train. He eventually returned, bringing with him a deep hatred for James Reed.

The people of the Donner Party were, for the most part substantial, well-to-do people. There were no "mountain men" among them—in fact, most of them had never seen a real mountain before coming West. The ways of the frontier were unknown to them as they made their way from the Little Sandy toward Fort Bridger.

The emigrants reached Fort Bridger on July 28th. The trail had been easy going and they had enjoyed themselves around the campfires each night. Virginia Reed remembered this as a joyful time.

Upon reaching the Fort, the emigrants were surprised by its appearance. It wasn't a fort at all. Just two double log cabins and a horse corral.

Jim Bridger, the famous trapper, had built the place three years before. He sold bad whiskey and supplies at inflated prices. He and his partner, Vasquez, kept the place open in summer and left it during winter. Business had been bad since emigrants had begun using the northwestern route from the Little Sandy. Of course the Fort lay directly in the path of Hasting's route and naturally Bridger and Vasquez had nothing but good to say about the route that lay ahead. They assured the emigrants that this route cut at least three hundred miles off their trip to California. They also assured them that there was plenty of water along the route except for a thirty or forty mile stretch. But, they could cut grass at the springs for the oxen and pack plenty of water to the next source.

What the emigrants didn't know was that somewhere inside the Fort lay a letter written to James Reed from his friend, Edwin Bryant, who had passed the Fort eight days earlier by pack train. The letter urged Reed to avoid Hasting's route at all costs. The letter was never delivered.

The emigrants stayed at Fort Bridger four days. The pasturage was good for the livestock and it was a pleasant place. They were a little alarmed that Hastings had not remained at the Fort waiting for them as he said he would, but according to Bridger and Vasquez, had found it necessary to go on ahead with sixty-six wagons since it was getting late in the season.

The emigrants made much needed repairs to their wagons during their stay at the Fort and on the last day of July, took the fork in the road that Hastings had recommended. Nothing lay between them and the Sacramento Valley.

The emigrants had now left the well-traveled Oregon Trail and followed the trail Hastings had broken. Travel became difficult and the wagons could barely make it through in many places. After four days of rough going, they reached the Bear River. After fording it, they came to an awesome looking canyon. The sound of wagon wheels echoed like gunshots as they made their way through the rocky canyon. After leaving the canyon, they came across a stream flowing northeast. They knew this was the Red Fork of the Weber River and that it flowed into the Great Salt Lake. They followed the trail four more miles and then halted.

In a bush beside the road someone had stuck a letter; it was from Hastings

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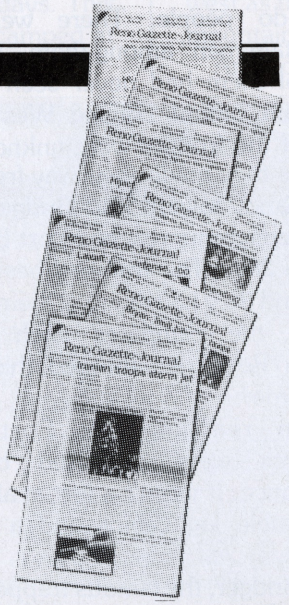

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informing anyone who followed to halt and send forward a messenger to overtake him. He feared the next canyon would be too dangerous to travel and would return to guide them to a safer route through the mountains.

James Reed, Stanton, a single man, and McCutchen whose family had joined the train at Fort Bridger went on ahead. It was August 6th.

The three men were expected to return in a day. When several days had passed, the emigrants camped at the head of the canyon began to worry. They questioned Hastings' knowledge as it was becoming apparent this wasn't a man they should be following. Time was getting short and they had heard that the snow in the Sierra could get as deep as that back in Illinios — maybe three feet and last eight or nine weeks before melting. Whatever mistakes had been made by following Hastings were now too late to correct. They must go on and try to cross the Sierra late in the season.

Reed returned after five days. He was alone. He, Stanton and McCutchen had finally overtaken Hastings camped on the south shore of the Great Salt Lake. Their horses had given out so Reed and Hastings had started back alone to show the emigrants the way over the mountains.

Hastings had promised to guide them over the mountains, but instead left Reed to make the trip alone after vaguely pointing out the route from a mountain peak.

The emigrants listened to Reed's report with growing apprehension. The choices were few. The canyon was far too dangerous for them to attempt and the route across the mountains would require several days of back-breaking labor in order to break a trail. The group finally decided unanimously to take the mountain route Reed had returned by.

They traveled for three days, cutting a trail yard by yard in some places. It was exhausting work. On the third day, they were overtaken by three wagons driven by the Graves family. "Uncle Billy" Graves was accompanied by his wife Elizabeth, their daughter and her husband, Jay Fosdick, and their other children ranging in age from twenty down to a nursing infant. Also with them was John Snyder. The

newcomers numbered thirteen and brought the number of people in the Donner Party to eighty-seven. Thirty-one of these were 12 years of age or younger.

The men were bone-weary from trail building and were happy to have the help of the men in the Graves family. By August 20th they finally reached the top of the mountain and looked with awe upon the wide valley of the Great Salt Lake.

Descending the western slope was almost as difficult as the climb had been. Upon reaching the bottom, they were reunited with Stanton and McCutchen who had been wandering for days through the mountains lost and starving. By the time the two men found the wagon train, they were ready to sacrifice their horses for something to eat.

The emigrants were happy to see the two men but the news they brought set panic in their hearts. What they had believed to be the crest of the mountain was just the divide between the Weber and Jordan Rivers.

They camped for the night to decide their next move. The descent down the canyon would take days of back-breaking work and the men were too worn out to even attempt it. Next morning they took a chance and double teamed the oxen and pulled the wagons one by one up the canyon's steep incline and made it over the top of the last ridge. They camped that night on the open expanse of the Great Salt Lake. They had beaten the Wahsatch mountains but it had taken twenty-one days to move thirty-six miles and provisions were running low.

On August 29th they camped where Reed, Stanton and McCutchen had overtaken Hastings three weeks earlier. One of the Donner wagons had fallen behind during the day and later that night came into camp bearing the body of a dead man. Luke Halloran, an invalid traveling with the Donners, had died of consumption. Halloran was the second to die up to this point. Sarah Keyes, James Reed's mother-in-law, had succumbed to old age before the wagons were well out on the plains.

After two more days on the trail, the emigrants reached the last source of water before starting across the desert. This was the stretch that Bridger and

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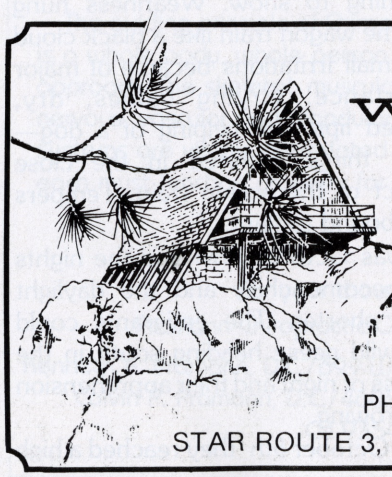

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Vasquez had told them about and they made preparations for the two day's hard drive they expected. No one had told them that a range of mountains lay in the middle of this vast expanse of desert.

After a hard day's drive, they reached the foothills and late in the afternoon, after climbing over a thousand feet to the top of the pass, what they saw sickened them. At least forty miles of flat, dry desert stretched out before them and they weren't even out of the mountains yet.

As they began crossing the desert, water supplies were already runing low and the oxen were suffering. Upon reaching the sink at the middle of the desert, wagons began sinking to their hubs in the soft crust and thirst was becoming more pronounced. Tamsen Donner gave her children lumps of sugar dipped in peppermint to ease their suffering.

The oxen were becoming weaker with each step and the emigrants saw mirages so real they wanted to run after them.

Reed decided to ride ahead to find water so he could come back and advise the struggling emigrants. He left at noon and did not reach the spring at the foot of the next range of mountains until evening. He estimated that he had come thirty miles over the parched desert.

After resting an hour, he started back with Eddy who had come ahead from the leading wagons earlier in the day. The trip back was a picture of devastation. Wagons and half-crazed livestock stretched out for miles across the desert, and men carrying empty water buckets cursed Hastings for leading them into this mess.

The two days hard drive that Hastings had told them about had turned to six days and, although no human life had been lost, many of the animals were either dead or lost somewhere in the desert. The emigrants were forced to abandon several wagons at the sink taking only the food they contained and leaving behind their possessions.

The people of the Donner Party began to see just how serious their situation had become. Food supplies were getting lower with each passing day and they were uncertain just how far they were from the Sacramento Valley. And, there was still the Sierra to cross.

James F. Reed and wife Margaret

The emigrants knew that without additional supplies they would never make it across the Sierra. Stanton and McCutchen offered to ride ahead to Sutter's Fort. They had heard that Sutter was a kind man and perhaps he could be convinced to send food back with the two men.

Stanton and McCutchen left on September 18th promising to return as quickly as they could. Stanton had no family but McCutchen left behind his wife and baby.

By September 30th the emigrants reached the South Fork of the Humboldt River and rejoined the Fort Hall trail about ten miles southwest of present day Elko, Nevada.

The hardships of the trip were beginning to show. Weariness hung over the wagon train like a black cloud and small irritations became of major importance. Crying babies, dry, cracked lips, the yelping of a dog—minor things festered in the close contact of the wagon train. Tempers were bound to flare.

It was October now and the nights had become chilly and the daylight hours shorter. The emigrants could hear wild geese heading south in the stillness of night and their apprehension was growing.

On October 5th they reached a high sand-hill. The hill was probably no worse than countless others they had crossed but it was a breaking point—the final straw.

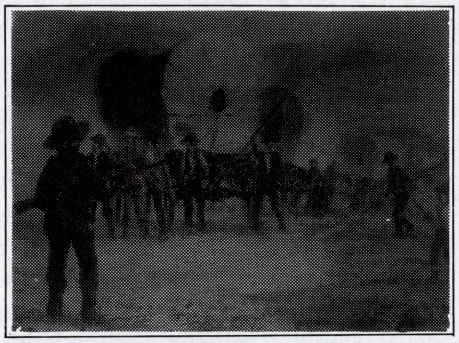
John Snyder, a teamster for the Graves family, became enraged when a team of oxen driven by Milt Elliot, Reed's teamster, became tangled with his team as they struggled up the hill. Snyder began beating his oxen violently and Reed came forward to protest. Snyder turned on him, hitting him with the butt of his whip and opened a large gash across Reed's head. As he tried to dodge Snyder's blows, he struck back with his hunting knife catching Snyder in the chest. Mrs. Reed ran between the two men and Snyder, still fighting, hit Mrs. Reed once and Reed twice more before staggering to the ground.

Reed, bleeding badly from the gash in his head, threw his knife in the river and went to help Snyder. But, the man was beyond help and died within a few minutes.

Snyder had been well-liked by most of the emigrants while Reed, being thought of as an aristocrat, was not. The Graves family cried for justice and Keseberg, who still held a grudge against Reed, prepared for the hanging.

A compromise, suggested by Eddy, who along with Milt Elliott stood firmly by Reed's side, was reached. Reed was told to leave the train and with the promise that his wife and children would be cared for, set out alone.

The hatred that had been with the emigrants on the sand-hill remained with them as they pushed forward toward the Sierra. The oxen were growing weaker as they pulled their heavy loads and Keseberg, trying to lighten his wagon, told an old man named Hardkoop who had been traveling with the Keseberg family to get out and walk.



By nightfall, Hardkoop was nowhere in sight and the men with horses refused to go back and look for him. Eddy, Elliot, and Pike offered to go back on foot for him but the other emigrants refused to wait for their return. The old man was left to perish.

By October 12th they had reached the sink of the Humboldt and the Indians were becoming a real problem. Livestock was being chased away during the night and arrows were being shot into the already suffering oxen. Between the desert and the Indians nearly a hundred head of cattle had been lost and more wagons had to be abandoned.

The emigrants transferred what little food they had left into the remaining fifteen wagons and set out across the desert between the Humboldt and Truckee Rivers. The Eddy family was on foot with Eddy carrying three-year-old Jimmy and Eleanor carrying the baby.

While crossing this last desert, many of the emigrants suffered terribly from thirst and lack of proper food. The Eddy children were growing weaker from lack of water and Eddy, in desperation, finally had to threaten Breen's life to convince him to share his supply of water with the children. It was every family for itself. The spirit of the "Company" had long since departed.

By October 15th , they reached the sparkling water of the Truckee River and knew that lack of water would not

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be a problem again. The emigrants were tempted to linger in the paradise by the river but knew they must go on.

After resting a day at the river, the emigrants started toward the pass. The going was tough as they made their way through narrow, rocky canyons. As they struggled with their oxen, Reinhardt and Spitzer caught up with them. The partners had stayed behind in the desert on the pretense of helping Wolfinger cache the contents of his wagon after losing his oxen. The two men were alone and told the emigrants that Indians had killed their missing companion. There was some doubt about the truth of their story and several of the emigrants secretly believed that the two men had killed Wolfinger with plans to return for the items in his wagon. Mrs. Wolfinger was devastated by the news and the kindly Donners took her in.

It had been three days since they had camped at the river and there was a critical shortage of food. As they made their way up the trail, they caught sight of Stanton riding down to meet them with seven pack mules loaded with food! He had two Indians with him, sent by Sutter to look after the mules. MuCutchen had taken sick and stayed behind at Sutter's to recover.

Mrs. Reed asked Stanton if he had seen her husband anywhere on the trail. He told her he had talked to James Reed and Walter Herron after seeing them come stumbling down a mountain half-starved and worn out. Herron had joined Reed after Reed had caught up with the leading wagons following the Snyder incident.

Stanton was shocked at the condition of the company he had left a month before. Cruelty and selfishness had replaced friendship and kindness. He would have been justified in leaving once he had delivered the provisions. Instead, he stayed with the group and took over the care of Mrs. Reed and the children.

On October 20th they reached Truckee Meadows (near present-day Reno). Despite protests from some of the emigrants, they made camp to rest before making the climb over the Sierra. The remaining cattle were in poor shape and a few days of grazing in the meadow would give them strength for the trip ahead. Stanton agreed with

this reasoning and reminded the group that Hastings had crossed the pass in December of the previous year.

The camp was serene that night as they sat around the campfire. Pike and Foster, Mrs. Murphy's sons-in-law, sat near the fire. Pike was cleaning a pepper-box pistol when he noticed the fire needed more wood and got up to fetch it. He handed the pistol to Foster and as he did, it exploded with the bullet hitting him. He was dead in an hour and left Mrs. Murphy's daughter, Harriet, a widow, and their small children fatherless. Foster remained the only grown man in the Murphy family.

A light snow began to fall at Truckee Meadows as they buried Pike. They stayed at their camp for a few more days and on October 25th, broke camp and headed toward the pass.

The distance between the meadow and the pass was fifty miles. They knew that before reaching the pass they would come to another meadow and then reach a cabin built by emigrants trapped by snow two years before. Just above the cabin lay Truckee (Donner) Lake.

As the first wagons reached the lake, clouds began lifting from the mountains revealing towering peaks and a heavy covering of snow. The trail was becoming more difficult as they passed by the lake trying to reach the pass. They realized the wagons could go no further in the deep snow and turned back to camp by the lake.

The Breen family reached the lake first and took possession of the cabin with the others camping where they could. It rained in torrents the next day and at nightfall the remaining wagons reached the makeshift camp at the lake. The Donners still had not arrived.

During the next few days several attempts were made to get over the pass — all failed. It was clear that the only way to get to the Sacramento Valley would be on foot carrying as much food as possible.

On the afternoon of October 28th, as the emigrants planned their escape, it began to snow. The first major winter storm had arrived and it continued for several days. As the snow grew deeper with each passing hour, the chance for escape became more remote.

Once the snow began to fly, the emigrants' fate was sealed.

The emigrants set about building shelters since it was apparent they would have to spend the winter in this snowy mountain wilderness. Keseberg constructed a lean-to on the west side of the cabin the Breens had moved into. Closer to the lake, the Murphys built a cabin using a huge boulder as one wall. The Graves and Reeds built a double cabin near Donner Creek making themselves as comfortable as possible. The Donners were camped at Alder Creek about seven miles from the lake. They had only tents to protect themselves from the freezing cold.

Sixty people huddled in the shelters near the lake. Twenty-nine of these were children and six were mere babies. At the Donner's Alder Creek camp there were twenty-one people with twelve of these just children.

By the middle of November most of the cattle had been slaughtered for food. Hunting and fishing would be their only hope for additional food, but the emigrants were outsmarted by the crafty mountain trout that swam within sight in the clear mountain lake that had not yet frozen over.

Eddy was the most proficient hunter in the group, but he was having very little success. With a borrowed gun, he trudged almost daily through the snow in search of game. The deer had long since moved to lower elevations where they could find food. Bears were going into hibernation and, except for a few stragglers, the ducks and geese had already flown south.

Eddy was able to shoot a coyote and an owl and, at one point, managed to shoot and then club to death a grizzly bear. The bear provided about 800 pounds of meat and Eddy gave the Murphy family half of it for the use of the gun. The Reed and Graves families got a share and the rest went to Eddy and his family. The Breens still had some of their livestock left and were subsisting on it.

On the 21st of November it was decided that another attempt should be made to cross the pass. Twenty-two people volunteered. Led by Stanton, they made it over the pass and camped that night in 6 feet of snow. They had a terrible time starting a fire and spent the night shivering 7,000 feet up in the Sierra. By the next morning they were discouraged and exhausted and knew they couldn't continue. They headed back to the camp by the lake where starvation awaited them.

They arrived back at camp by midnight depressed and full of despair. The next day the second big storm hit the Sierra and it snowed for eight days. During the storm, the few oxen that were left unslaughtered wandered off and died. They were soon covered with snow and lost. The remaining horses and Sutter's mules suffered the same fate. The emigrant's only food was now somewhere under the eight feet of snow

that covered the ground.

On December 6th, Stanton and Graves began making snowshoes. Both men had some experience with walking in them and, at this point, it would be their only hope for escape. Graves took the U-shaped oxbows and sawed them into light strips and then wove rawhide over the hickory frames.

The emigrants were beginning to suffer terribly from lack of food and most of them were so weak they couldn't even gather wood to keep their fires going. The cold was becoming unbearable. Baylis Williams, one of Reed's hired men, had become delirious and was dying. The group at the lake had not heard from the Donners at Alder Creek for weeks.

A group of fifteen of the emigrants prepared to leave the camp by the lake. While finishing final preparations, another major storm hit and lasted five days. During the storm the snowshoes were completed and meager amounts of food packed for the trip. On December 14th the sky cleared and they were ready to leave the following morning.

When they awoke the next day, Baylis Williams was dead. His body lay in the Reed cabin as they laced on their snowshoes and started toward the pass. Many of them were leaving behind their small children so they could have what food remained at the camp.

Reed and McCutchen had left Sutter's Fort on October 31st with supplies for the emigrants. As they started out, they wondered if they would reach their families in time to save them. On that same day, the emigrants had made an attempt to escape but failed. Reed and McCutchen also failed, blocked by deepening snow near the west side of the pass. They returned to Sutter's to plan their next attempt.

The snowshoe party made only four miles the first day. The next day they climbed over the pass and camped that night in snow twelve feet deep.

By the third day Stanton, who was guiding the group, was growing weak and suffered from snow-blindness. He fell behind and the two Indians he had brought with him from Sutter's took the position of guides.

They made six miles that day and about an hour after they made camp, Stanton came stumbling in.

On the fifth night they camped five miles from Bear Valley where Reed and McCutchen had cached beef and flour after their failed attempt at the pass. The emigrants had no way of knowing this and awoke the next morning, after another miserable night in freezing

temperatures, with only a day's food left in their packs.

Stanton, who had once made it safely to the Sacramento Valley, was now dying. He sat peacefully by the fire smoking his pipe as the emigrants prepared to go on. He told the fourteen others that he would be along soon knowing that he would never leave the deep snow all around him.

The loss of Stanton meant the two Indians would have to lead the group to the safety of the Sacramento Valley. They had made the trip only once and immediately made a mistake in direction. Instead of heading down Bear Valley, the group headed south. They were soon lost and out of food.

The group struggled on through the snow for two days with their consuming hunger their only thought. They began to look at each other as they grew weaker—wondering who would die first and be the source of survival for those who remained.

At their camp on Christmas Eve, Antonio, who had been herdsman for the cattle, lay by the fire breathing unnaturally. After awhile he flung his arm out and his hand fell into the fire. Eddy, realizing that Antonio no longer cared, watched the hand shrivel to a coal.

"Uncle Billy" Graves died that same night as a horrendous storm blew around the twelve that remained. Their fire died out and they sat huddled under a blanket buried in the snow for thirty hours while the storm raged outside. Most of them were half-mad from hunger and cold.

Patrick Dolan ran from the protection of the blanket, trying to escape the cold and hunger. He returned after awhile but fell into a deep coma and died.

The sky cleared the day after Christmas and the starved people crept from beneath their blanket. Eddy got a fire started as the others began to strip the flesh from Patrick Dolan's body. They ate in silence, unable to look at each other. Tears streamed down their faces. Eddy and the two Indians refused to eat.

Lemuel Murphy, Mrs. Murphy's 13-year old son, was too weak to eat and Mrs. Foster, the boy's older sister, held his head and tried to comfort him as he died.

They stayed at this camp for three days. They roasted meat as needed and dried the rest to take along to sustain the ten people that remained.

Eddy was beginning to show signs of starvation. His companions finally convinced him to eat and, as he looked at the food offered him, he thought back to a time when he was civilized. After he began eating he lost his disgust and looked at it in a practical way — he was a living human being and he must eat to survive.

On the last day of 1846, as they walked wearily along a ridge, they saw distant ridges that were free of snow. They were encouraged even though before reaching them they would have to cross a canyon 2,000 feet deep.

They camped that night at the edge of the canyon and ate the last of the dried flesh. The next day they crossed the canyon and set up camp again as darkness fell. It had been a week since they had left the camp of death.

Fosdick, "Uncle Billy" Graves' son-in-law, was near collapse and they waited two days so he could rest.

They noticed that the snow was

becoming firmer and walking without snowshoes would now be possible. They took the rawhide from the snowshoes and roasted it over the fire. That was their only food and they were facing starvation once again.

On January 4th they camped on bare ground. That night they took their shoes and boots and roasted them. It filled their stomachs but was far from nourishing. They began looking at the two Indians and Foster wanted to kill them. Eddy warned the two men so they could flee.

Eddy, accompanied by Mary Graves, went ahead of the group to try and find some game. After hours of searching, they came across a deer. With shaking hands, Eddy fired and once more there was food for everyone. It was too late for Fosdick — he died at camp that night.

With the departure of the two Indians and Fosdick's death, there were seven people left to feed. The deer would not last long so they took the heart, liver, arms and legs from Fosdick's body. Mrs. Fosdick was forced to suffer the horror of seeing her husband's heart roasting over the fire.

It had been three weeks since they had left the lake. They had faced hardships inconceivable to the minds of most people. Their feet were broken and bleeding from being frozen over and over again and they looked like hollow-eyed, walking skeletons. Their only thoughts were of survival.

They walked during the daylight hours and slept fitfully each night. Their food supply was once again exhausted and the thought of sacrificing someone in the party went through their minds. Again, Eddy fought with them to keep them from killing each other.

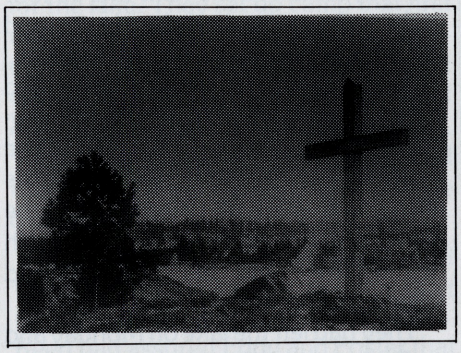
Eventually, they came across the tracks of the two Indians and Foster, Mrs. Murphy's remaining son-in-law, went after them. He found them sitting against a tree and shot them both. No one would camp with Foster after that except the two women of his family. The man was no longer sane.

They were now in a hilly area with very few trees. Eddy and the three women who walked with him had nothing to eat except the grass on the hills. The weather had been clear for two weeks but now the clouds moved in and the rain beat upon their wasted bodies.

On January 12th they came across human tracks and were filled with hope for the first time in weeks. They followed the tracks and soon came to an Indian village. The Indians took pity on these poor, suffering people and gave them acorns, the only food they had.

Eddy rested for awhile and then was led to Johnson's Ranch, at the edge of the Sacramento Valley.

The people at the small settlement



were appalled at Eddy's condition and the story of his escape. They put Eddy to bed and went back for the others, following the trail left by Eddy's raw and bleeding feet.

It had been thirty-three days since the emigrants on snowshoes had left the lake. Of the fifteen who started out, seven survived — two men and five women.

Reed and McCutchen had both been trying to raise a relief party; Reed in Yerba Buena (not yet called San Francisco), and McCutchen in Sonoma. With the arrival of the snowshoers at Johnson's Ranch, many people were trying to raise money for supplies in an attempt to rescue those left in the snowy wilderness. News of the Donner Party's plight was spreading quickly.

The emigrants left at the lake knew nothing of all this. Their lives had been reduced to one terrible day of suffering after another. There was no food except the hides and bones that boiled constantly over the fires inside the dark, dirty cabins. There was a little flour left but this was being mixed with water for the babies.

Things were even worse at the Donner's Alder Creek camp. "Uncle Jake," George Donner's brother, had died. So had two of the teamsters, Shoemaker and Smith, and the German, Reinhart. "Uncle George" was in bad shape since he had cut his hand badly and it had become infected.

On the morning of January 31, 1847, seven men men left Sutter's Fort on horseback. They reached Johnson's Ranch where seven more men joined them. Eddy, although he had only rested two weeks from his ordeal with the snowshoe party, was going with them. His wife, Eleanor, and his small son and daughter were still at the lake.

The relief party rode into the seventh major storm to hit the Sierra that winter. Rain pelted them for nearly forty-eight hours while snow fell at the lake they so desperately wanted to reach.

At the lake, as the relief party moved toward them, Eddy's baby daughter died followed a few days later by her mother. Eddy's three-year-old son, Jimmy, was still alive at one of the cabins near the lake.

The relief party set up a base camp at Mule Springs in three feet of snow. Eddy, already weakened from the ride, knew he would never make it the rest of the way on foot and turned back for Johnson's Ranch. He took the livestock with him since they too could go no farther in the deepening snow.

Ten men went on foot toward the pass with the others staying behind to guard the supplies that would not fit into their packs. They carried as much beef and flour as they could and still be able to struggle through the deep snow.

At the lake, Patrick Breen began to pray. The others knelt down beside him. Prayer was the only thing they had left. The hides that had been keeping them alive were almost gone.

Three of the ten men in the relief party refused to go on as they approached the cold, windy pass. The seven who remained had made a promise and they intended to stand by it no matter what the cost.

On February 18th, they reached the top of the pass and looked eastward toward the lake. They could see no signs of life as they approached the lake and yelled to arouse anyone within earshot. One by one the skinny, starved people began to appear from the cabins buried beneath the snow.

Some men from the relief party went

on to the Donner camp returning with the teamster, Noah James, Mrs. Wolfinger and four of the older children. Tamsen Donner had refused to leave her sick husband or small children. Jean Baptiste was told to remain at the camp to care for the ailing men and the women and children until the next relief party could bring them out.

The men had very little food to leave at the camp and the Donners told them they would try to find the livestock that had been lost in the snow during the first storm. If that failed, they would uncover the bodies of those who had died and use them for food.

The six from the Donner camp and seventeen from the lake were selected to cross the pass with the relief party. One of the rescuers carried three-year-old Naomi Pike wrapped in a blanket. The man had seen her mother at Johnson's Ranch and was moved by her courage at crossing the pass with the snowshoers.

Seventeen people were to remain at the lake and twelve at the Donner camp. Twenty-three would try to escape with the relief party. The people who stayed behind were as desperate as they had been before the arrival of the the relief party since there was no food to leave behind.

On February 22nd the rescuers and emigrants left the lake headed toward the pass. Of the twenty-three emigrants in the party, three were men, four were women and the rest were children. The children had to walk since the adults were too weak to carry them.

Little Tommy Reed struggled valiantly through the snow but soon gave out. It was too much for the little three-year-old, and his sister Patty was exhausted too. Mrs. Reed was torn between returning to the cabins with Tommy and Patty or going on for the sake of five-year-old Jimmy and Twelve-year-old Virginia who were able to continue.

Mrs. Reed finally consented to have the two children returned to the cabins with the promise that as soon as they reached the safety of Bear Valley someone would return for the two children. She was devastated at seeing her children being taken back toward the cabins. She knew that they would face starvation and hoped someone could get to them in time.

There was little food for the men and emigrants as they went on through the snow. The rescuers were counting on the caches they had made along the way and, until reaching the first of these, they were allowed just one ounce of smoked beef and two spoons of flour per day.

Upon reaching the first cache, they discovered that animals had gotten to it and all the food was gone. It would be four day's walk to the next one so four of the rescuers pushed ahead to try and bring back food to the rest of the party.

John Denton was weakening and suffered, as Stanton had, from snow-blindness. He soon fell behind and perished. Little Ada Keseberg was failing and died at camp during the night. Mrs. Keseburg had now lost both her children and her husband had stayed behind at the cabins.

They had left the lake on Monday and on Friday two of the men who had gone ahead returned with beef from the second cache. The men had expected to find another relief party waiting for them at the site of the second cache, but no one was there.

Reed and McCutchen had left Johnson's Ranch on the same day the relief party and emigrants had left the lake. On February 27th, they met the group being led out, and on the deep snow, Reed was reunited with his wife and two of his children after a separation of over four months. He was filled with joy, but the reunion was less than perfect since two of his children remained beyond the pass — starving. He knew he would have to reach them soon and, with his men, went on. They were just beginning the most difficult part of their journey while the others would soon reach the safety of Bear Valley.

McCutchen had accompanied Reed although he knew there was no hope that his little one-year-old, Harriet would still be alive. His wife had come out with the snowshoers and told him of his little girl's death. Still, he felt honor-bound to help those who had shared what little food they had with his wife and child.

On March 1st, the second relief party reached the lake. Reed immediately saw his little Patty and grabbed her to him. He asked about Tommy and his daughter told him her little brother was inside the cabin sleeping. Reed walked down through the snow-hole to the dark cabin and found his son — now a mere skeleton. Tommy didn't recognize his father and had to be assured repeatedly by Patty that this was indeed their father.

Reed and McCutchen entered the Murphy cabin where Mrs. Murphy, Keseberg and the small sons of Eddy and Foster were staying. The cabin was filthy and vermin infested. The two boys lay in bed helpless and whimpering.

The men set about cleaning the children and wrapping them in clean flannel blankets. Reed helped clean Keseberg who had wanted to hang him four months before. As the two men worked, they caught sight of Milt Elliott's body in the corner of the cabin. Except for the head and face, most of the flesh had been torn away. They saw tufts of different colors of human hair near the fireplace.

After making the people at the lake as comfortable as they could, they went on to the Alder Creek camp. Signs of cannibalism lay everywhere.

Reed entered the tent of his old friend, George Donner, and found him in bed with the infection from his hand eating its way to his shoulder. Tamsen seemed in good condition. Jean Baptiste had been helpful in cutting wood and taking the children outside for air and exercise.

Reed told those remaining at the camp about the third and larger relief party that followed him. He fully expected them to arrive within a few days with supplies. Most of those remaining at the Donner camp decided to wait for the next relief party to rescue them. George Donner and Elizabeth, his sister-in-law, were far too weak to leave the camp and Tamsen wouldn't leave her failing husband even though Reed was leaving two of his men to care for them.

Reed returned to the lake with three of the children who were big enough to walk. He left nine people waiting at the camp for the next relief party.

Everyone who was able would leave the camp by the lake to go with Reed. Members of the Breen and Graves families who had not already escaped prepared to go, and Reed prepared his two children for the long trip. In all, seventeen people would cross the pass

with their rescuers.

Reed left one of his men at the camp by the lake to look after the five who remained there; Mrs. Murphy, her son Simon, Foster and Eddy's sons, and Keseberg who had hurt his foot and could not travel.

On March 3rd, they started toward the pass. The going was tough with so many adults trying to carry small children who could not make it on their own. Reed was alarmed at their slow pace and knew they must move faster or they would run out of food long before reaching their first cache. He also knew that the clear weather of the past few weeks would not last.

It took two days for the group to make it just to the foot of the pass. Reed called three of his best mountain men to him and told them to go ahead to the first cache and return with food as quickly as they could. He told them if they came across the next relief party to join it and return. The three men left, taking no food for themselves.

The four remaining rescuers got the emigrants over the pass and made camp. Late that night a violent storm blew in preceded by hard, freezing winds. The snow began to fall and the group huddled near the fire shivering from cold and hunger.

The storm raged on for three nights and on the last night, Isaac Donner, Jacob Donner's small son, died. Most of the others were suffering terribly from cold and hunger.

Reed decided to take those who were able to walk and leave those who were too weak and push on. He still expected another relief party to be along soon. Mrs. Graves and her children stayed. And, although the Breen family seemed fit, they elected to stay by the fire. Reed gathered wood to last them several days, but he had no food to leave with them. Thirteen people huddled by the fire on the snow as Reed and the others left.

Eddy and Foster, whose sons still remained at the lake, decided to make an attempt at the pass. Eddy had been forced to return to Johnson's Ranch after exhausting himself in joining the first relief party. When the two men reached the Camp at Mule Springs, they were disheartened to find Woodsworth, the man who was supposed to follow Reed with the larger relief party, sitting comfortably near his campfire. He told Eddy and Foster that the weather was far too harsh to attempt a rescue. The two men looked at Woodsworth in disbelief since they had made the crossing under far harsher conditions. They finally convinced Woodsworth and five of his men to accompany them into the mountains with supplies.

The next morning the two fathers and Woodsworth and his men set out for the lake. They set up camp that first night and, in the stillness of the snow-covered pine forest, heard distant voices. It was Reed and the group of emigrants he had managed to bring out. They had made it and Reed had managed to come through this terrible ordeal with his family intact.

Eddy and Foster, along with five of Woodsworth's men, set out the next morning to try and rescue the others. Reed had assured Eddy and Foster that their sons were still alive when he left the lake. Reed told them he didn't hold much hope for those who had stayed behind on the trail. They had no food and unless the stronger ones had eaten the bodies of those who died, there would be no one left at that camp to save.

After two days on the trail, the seven men came to the place where Reed had left the others. They walked up to the edge of a pit melted twenty-five feet deep into the snow. The fire blazed at the bottom of the pit on bare ground. Around the fire, the men saw things so hideous they all cringed.

Mrs. Graves body lay at the bottom of the pit stripped of flesh. Her heart and liver boiled in a kettle on the fire. Little Elizabeth Graves, just a baby of one year, sat with her hand touching her mother's body. She was sobbing.

There was little left of the body of Mrs. Graves' five-year-old son. The mother and son had died and the eleven others, starving in the pit for six days, had used their bodies, and the body of Isaac Donner who had died during the storm, to survive.

Three of the rescuers decended the steps that had been cut in the snow and gathered up the emigrants and their belongings for the trip to Bear Valley. Eddy, Foster and two of the men set out toward the lake.

They reached the Murphy cabin on March 13th. Two of the men whom Reed had left to watch over those remaining at the lake had deserted. They had promised Tamsen Donner they would lead her three small daughters to safety, but had taken them only as far as the lake and then fled with the few things of value that Tamsen had sent with her girls.

Tamsen had come to the lake, leaving her husband George in the care of Jean Baptiste and Reed's man, the day before Eddy and Foster's arrival. She had learned that her daughters were still at the Murphy cabin and had come to look after them.

The young sons of Eddy and Foster had starved too long — they were dead. Keseberg, that man of suspect character, had eaten both bodies. Eddy, grief stricken, wanted to kill Keseberg, but he looked at the pathetic figure before him and knew this would not be the time.

Both Foster and Eddy put aside their grief and got on to the business of planning the trip back across the mountains. George Donner was still alive at the Alder Creek camp as was little Sammie, Jacob Donner's youngest son. Eddy and Foster told Tamsen they could not risk taking the time to go to the camp since a storm was threatening, so Tamsen returned to her husband's side. She left her three daughters to escape with the relief party.

Eddy and Foster made Mrs. Murphy comfortable and took the three young girls and Mrs. Murphy's ten-year-old son with them. They left Keseberg with Mrs. Murphy, not caring whether he was comfortable or not.

Upon reaching the bottom of the pass they saw Jean Baptiste and Clark, Reed's man. The two men had deserted the Alder Creek camp of the Donners, and instead of carrying four-year-old Sammie, Clark carried a heavy pack loaded with booty.

Eddy and Foster made it to Sutter's safely with the four young children. It would be a month before anyone crossed the pass again.

The next party to reach the lake was sent, not for relief, but for salvage. They were to carry back the belongings of the emigrants and would be entitled to keep half of all they could carry out.

The party was led by a fearsome mountain man named Fallon Le Gros.

He led six men, including Foster who had come out with the snowshoers and then returned to try to save his son. They left Johnson's Ranch on April 13th and made it to the lower end of Bear Valley before they had to dismount and continue on foot through the snow.

The snow was hard now and they made good time, reaching the lake on the 17th. What horrors they found exceeded those of the relief parties. Mutilated bodies lay everywhere.

After searching the cabins and finding no signs of life, they went on to Alder Creek. It was at the Donner camp that they expected to find the most valuable goods.

Fallon knew that Tamsen Donner had at least fifteen hundred dollars in silver because she had offered it to Eddy for taking her children to safety. Eddy had refused the money saying it would not be worth carrying the extra weight.

As they made their way toward Alder Creek, Fallon noticed tracks that led to Jacob Donner's tent. The person who had left the tracks was not found anywhere at the camp, but, as Fallon determined, had returned to the lake that morning.

Fallon and his men searched the camp finding much of value to be salvaged. They also found a huge kettle containing human flesh, and three ox legs near the kettle. The oxen had apparently been buried beneath the snow and were well preserved. They could find no sign of anyone using the oxen as food. They also found a horse preserved in the same way.

Further search revealed the body of George Donner. He had been dead not longer than four days, but his body was badly mutilated. His head had been split open and the brains had been removed. There was no sign of little Sammie or Tamsen Donner.

Fallon remained at the camp with three of his men to continue salvage operations while Foster and the other three men returned to the lake in search of the person who had made the fresh tracks.

They found Keseberg in the cabin. Human bones lay all over the cabin floor and a kettle containing fresh human liver boiled over the fire. Another kettle sat nearby filled with

Those Who Survived

Name	Age	Association to the Group
Walter Herron (1)	25	Teamster for Reed
James F. Reed (1)	46	Prominent member of the party
Mary Graves (2)	20	Daughter of Graves
Sarah Fosdick (2)	22	Wife of Jay Fosdick - Daughter of Graves
Amanda McCutchen (2)	24	Wife of William McCutchen
Harriet Pike (2)	21	Wife of William Pike
Sarah Foster (2)	23	Wife of William Foster - Daughter of Mrs. Murphy
William Foster (2)	28	Husband of Sarah Foster
William Eddy (2)	28	Only survivor of the Eddy family
Margaret Reed (3)	32	Wife of James Reed
Virginia Reed (3)	12	Daughter of Mrs. Reed by a former marriage
James Reed, Jr. (3)	5	Son of James Reed
Elitha Donner (3)	14	Daughter of George Donner by a former marriage
Leanna Donner (3)	12	Daughter of George Donner by a former marriage
George Donner, Jr. (3)	9	Son of Jacob Donner
William Murphy (3)	11	Son of Mrs. Murphy
Mary Murphy (3)	13	Daughter of Mrs. Murphy
Naomi Pike (3)	3	Daughter of the Pikes
William C. Graves (3)	18	Son of Graves
Eleanor Graves (3)	15	Daughter of Graves
Lovina Graves (3)	13	Daughter of Graves
Phillipine Keseberg (3)	32	Wife of Lewis Keseberg
Edward Breen (3)	13	Son of Breens
Simon Breen (3)	9	Son of Breens
Eliza Williams (3)	25	Hired girl - Sister of Baylis Williams
Noah James (3)	20	Teamster for Donners
Mrs. Wolfinger (3)	?	Wife of Wolfinger
Solomon Hook (4)	14	Son of Elizabeth Donner by a former marriage
Martha (Patty) Reed (4)	8	Daughter of Reeds
Thomas Reed (4)	03	Son of Reeds
William McCutchen (1)	30	Member of party - went to Sutter's Fort with Stanton
Patrick Breen (4&5)	40	Irish member of party
Margaret Breen (4&5)	40	Wife of Patrick Breen
John Breen (4&5)	14	Son of Breens
Patrick Breen, Jr. (4&5)	11	Son of Breens
James Breen (4&5)	4	Son of Breens
Peter Breen (4&5)	7	Son of Breens
Isabella Breen (4&5)	1	Daughter of Breens
Nancy Graves (4&5)	9	Daughter of Graves
Jonathan Graves (4&5)	7	Son of Graves
Elizabeth Graves (4&5)	1	Daughter of Graves (Died after reaching Sutter's)
Mary Donner (4&5)	7	Daughter of Jacob Donner
Simon Murphy (5)	10	Mrs. Murphy's son
Frances Donner (5)	6	Daughter of George Donner
Georgia Donner (5)	4	Daughter of George Donner
Eliza Donner (5)	3	Daughter of George Donner
John Baptiste (5)	23	Teamster for George Donner
Lewis Keseberg (6)	32	German member of party

(1) Preceded party to California
(2) Survivors of snowshoe party
(3) Rescued by first relief party
(4) Rescued by second relief party
(5) Rescued by third relief party
(6) Rescued by fourth (salvage) party

Those Who Perished

(In approximate order of death)

Name	Age	Association to the Group
Sarah Keyes (1)	?	Mrs. Reed's mother
Luke Holloran (1)	25	Invalid traveling with the Donners
John Snyder (1)	25	Teamster for Graves killed by Reed
Hardkoop (1)	60	Traveled with Keseberg
Wolfinger (1)	?	Claimed to have been killed by Indians
William Pike (1)	25	Mrs. Murphy's son-in-law - killed by William Foster accidentally
Baylis Williams (6)	24	Hired hand for Reed
Jacob Donner (2)	65	Brother of George Donner
Samuel Shoemaker (2)	25	Teamster for Donners
Joseph Rheinhart (2)	30	Spitzer's partner
James Smith (2)	25	Teamster for Reed
Charles Stanton (3)	35	No family
F.W. Graves (3)	57	"Uncle Billy" Head of Graves family
Antoine (3)	23	Hired hand
Patrick Dolan (3)	40	Member of party
Lemuel Murphy (3)	12	Son of Mrs. Murphy
Jay Fosdick (3)	23	Graves' son-in-law
Lewis (3)	?	Indian guide killed by William Foster
Salvador (3)	?	Indian guide killed by William Foster
Karl Berger (6)	30	"Dutch Charley" teamster for Keseberg
Lewis Keseberg,Jr. (6)	1	Son of Lewis Keseberg
John Landrum Murphy (6)	15	Son of Mrs. Murphy
Margaret Eddy (6)	1	Daughter of the Eddys
Harriet McCutchen (6)	1	Daughter of the McCutchens
Augustus Spitzer (6)	30	Partner of Rheinhart
Eleanor Eddy (6)	25	Wife of William Eddy
Milt Elliot (6)	28	Teamster for Reed
Catherine Pike (6)	1	Daughter of the Pikes (Mrs. Murphy's granddaughter)
Ada Keseberg (4)	3	Daughter of the Kesebergs
John Denton (4)	28	Traveled with the George Donners
William Hook (6)	12	Elizabeth Donner's son by a former marriage
Elizabeth Graves (5)	47	Wife of F.W. "Uncle Billy" Graves
Issac Donner (5)	5	Son of Jacob Donner
F.W. Graves, Jr. (5)	5	Son of Graves
Lewis Donner (5)	3	Son of Jacob Donner
Elizabeth Donner (2)	45	Wife of Jacob Donner
Samuel Donner (2)	4	Son of Jacob Donner
George Foster (6)	4	Son of the Fosters
James Eddy (6)	3	Son of the Eddys
Lavina Murphy (6)	50	Widow - Matriarch of the Murphy clan
George Donner (2)	62	Wagontrain Captain
Tamsen Donner (6)	45	Wife of George Donner

(1) Died enroute to winter camps
(2) Died in Donner's Alder Creek camp
(3) Died with snowshoe party enroute to Sacramento
(4) Died with first relief party
(5) Died with second relief party
(6) Died at lake camp

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blood.

Keseberg claimed that Tamsen Donner had come to his cabin after her husband's death and seemed a little crazed. He said he had wrapped Tamsen in blankets and put her to bed but she had died some time during the night.

Foster thought Keseberg's story seemed strange because he had seen Tamsen a month before and she seemed in reasonably good health. And then there was the matter of the silver. The men had been unable to find any of it in their search.

They questioned Keseberg about it and he claimed innocence, but the men found a bundle near Keseberg containing jewelry and silks belonging to the Donners. They also found two pistols belonging to George Donner.

Fallon came to the lake camp and threatened Keseberg until he finally led the men to the place where he had cached $273.00 belonging to the Donners. What happened to the rest of the silver is a mystery.

As the men prepared to leave the camp by the lake, they looked for Keseberg. They found him inside the cabin devouring the rest of the contents of the kettle.

The salvage party returned to Sutter's Fort and Lewis Keseberg went with them. The last of the survivors had crossed the pass.

Standing near the pass above Donner Lake, it was hard to imagine the suffering of these poor people. A hundred and thirty-seven years have passed — man has gone to the moon, and search and rescue teams now pluck stranded people off the peaks of the Sierra in a matter of hours.

The shore of Donner Lake is dotted with beautiful homes and a sandy beach lies at the west end. The town of Truckee is nearby, but you can still see the great rock that made up one wall of the Murphy cabin.

A thirty foot tall monument stands near the site of the Breen cabin. The base of the monument is twenty feet tall representing the depth of the snow that winter by the lake, and the figures atop the base — man, woman and child, stand facing the pass. A beautiful museum has been constructed near the monument and it is filled with relics from the Donner Party and the railroad that now crosses the pass.

The years have passed, but the courage and heroism of the Donner Party will live on in our minds forever.

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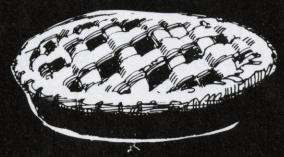

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SIERRA ICE SKATING

The Eastern Sierra is famous for alpine and cross-country skiing, but another traditional winter sport practiced here is sometimes overlooked—ice skating. Skating is attractive because, like skiing, it offers great outdoor recreation in a picturesque location. People whose skating experience has been restricted to indoor rinks often aren't aware of the salutary benefits of skating freely in a magnificent mountain setting.

Those who take advantage of Sierra skating resources often become dedicated enthusiasts. The area has been the home of a competitive ice hockey association, and one team, the Fleshy Headed Mutants, has traveled to Reno and Squaw Valley for games.

Since skating is best during times of little or no snowfall, it offers skiers an outdoor alternative when ski conditions are uninviting. There are many local lakes, ponds and reservoirs which offer excellent ice skating at various times during the fall and winter, most notably those in the Bishop Creek and Mammoth Lakes areas. The most consistently good locations for skating have been the Intake II Reservoir in the Bishop area and Lake Mary, Convict Lake and the Whitmore Alkali Ponds in the Mammoth area. Because of the impact of changing weather on ice conditions, skaters must often move during the season from one lake or pond to another to find suitable ice. Storms or warm spells can mean the end of skating for several weeks.

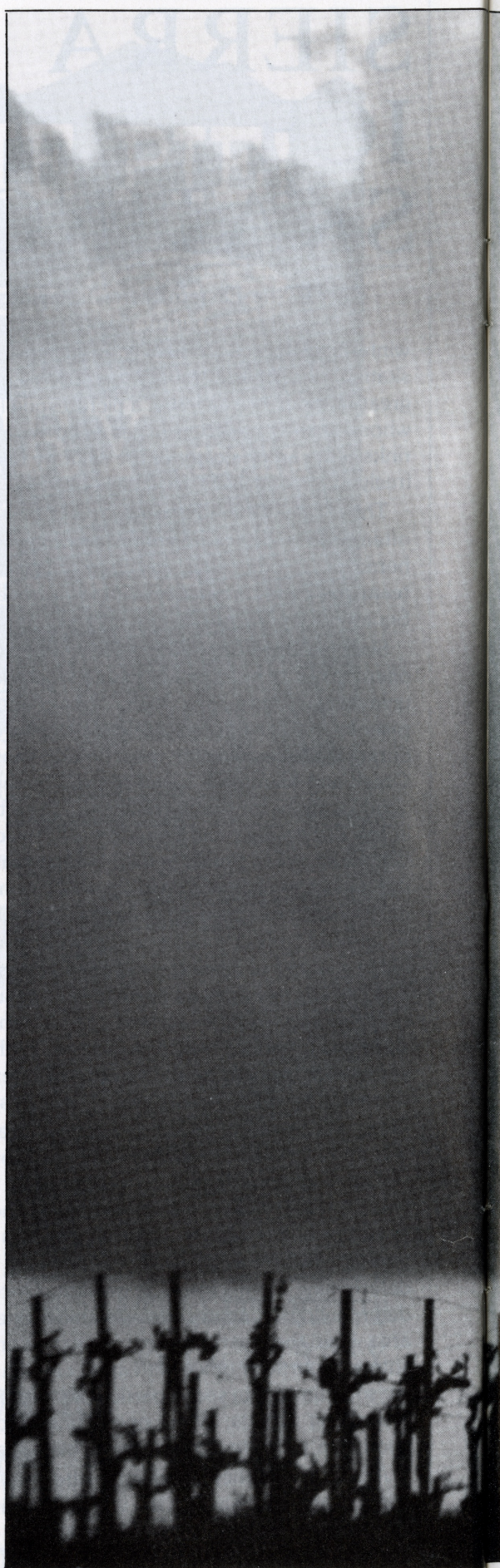
Although rain does no harm to skating surfaces, a heavy snowfall may ruin a surface for the entire season. In addition, a surface which is perfect in the morning will sometimes become mushy toward the afternoon when the temperature rises. As one Sierra skater says, "When it's there, you have to go for the gusto." Skating is usually available between November and late February.

High Sierra residents who follow certain safety practices have skated for years without problem. They usually skate in groups and avoid skating alone. Novices really shouldn't attempt to skate unless someone with experience at determining ice thickness is present. Once a safe area is determined, skaters try to stay within the perimeters of that area. Even the most experienced skaters only venture onto untested portions of ice with great caution, because there are sometimes thin spots, particularly near flowing water or protruding objects. When one is unsure of the ice, it's a good idea to skate close to shore over shallow water.

Although weather conditions often make it a fleeting thing, skating does add to the variety of activities that make the Eastern Sierra such an attractive place for the outdoorsman. □

Few Californians, let alone wine aficionados, realize the extent of the early California wine industry's development and influence upon the world market during the last century. Yet, according to Jim Lapsley, Instructor of Enology at U.C. Davis and partner of the Orleans Hill Vinicultural Association, it was only in 1980 that the total acres devoted to grape plantings for wine production equalled that of the vinicultural acreage of 1877. The major reason for California's extensive plantings during the late 1800's was the speculative response to the phylloxera epidemic which was decimating European vines (Vitis vinifera) in France, Germany, and Italy.

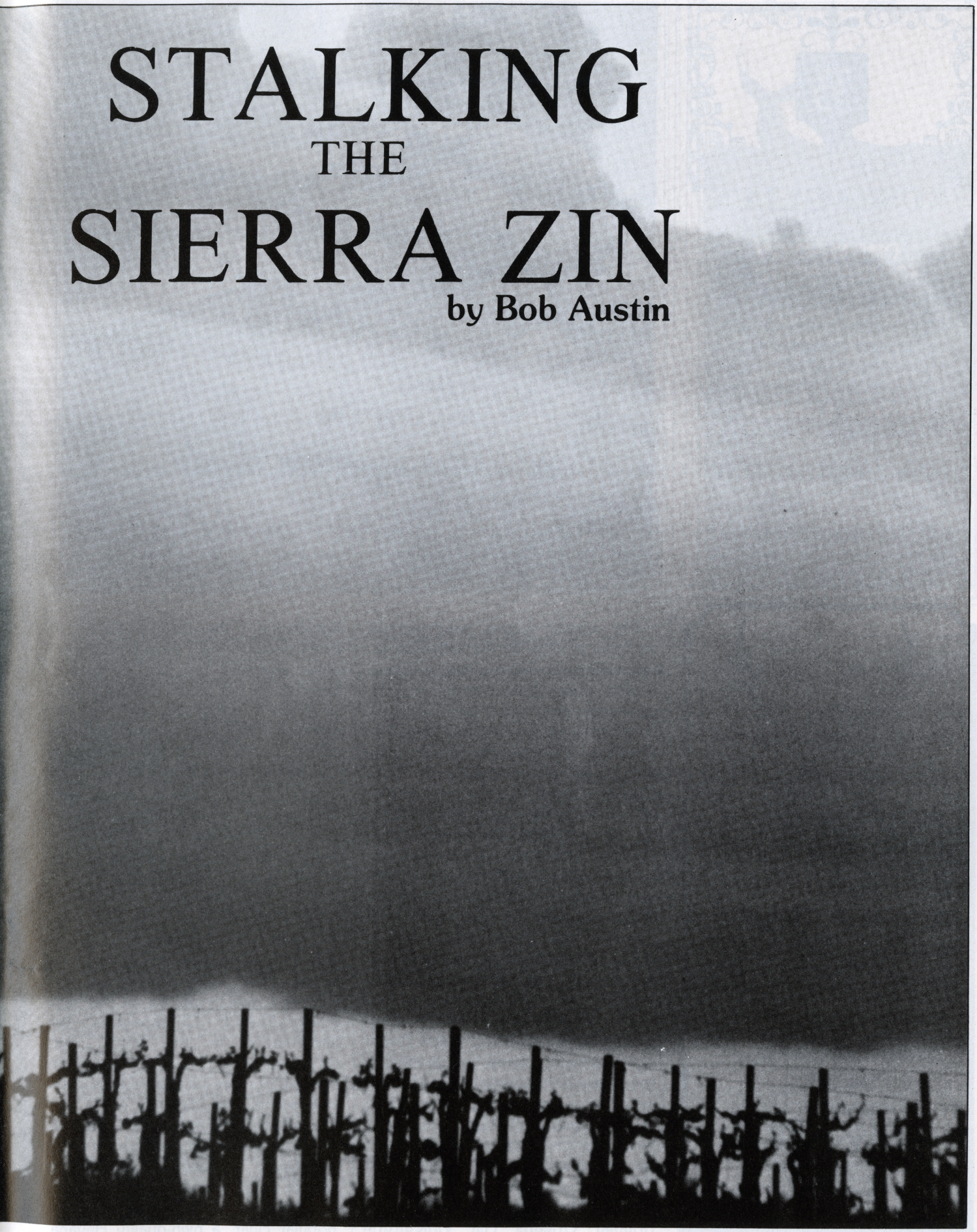
The roots of American vines (Vitis lambrusca) had become conditioned to the phylloxera louse, which was destroying Europe's vineyards, and shoots of French Cabernets, Merlots, Pinots, Chardonnays; German Rieslings, Mosels, Gewurztraminers; Italian Gringolinos, Barberas, and Charbonos were all grafted with great success to American root-stocks. Wines "rebottled" on the East Coast and sold as French premium wines were actually high quality California wines sold by bulk out of San Francisco. By this I do not mean to imply that the California wine industry of the 19th century sprung up overnight.



photos by Daniel D'Agostini

STALKING THE SIERRA ZIN

by Bob Austin



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The mission grapes were planted originally in 1796 by the followers of Father Junipero Serra only to lay fallow by 1840. The '49ers were the ones to accelerate the need for Northern California's domestic wine and to arrange for its availability. As early as 1852 plantings were made in Yolo County at the direction of Sacramento saloon-keeper Jacob Knauth to provide his establishment, the Sutter Floral Gardens, with good quality bulk wine. In 1856 the D'Agostini winery and vineyard was established in Plymouth. (Some of the original D'Agostini Zinfandel vines are still producing.) In 1861, Agoston Haraszthy, Hungarian nobleman and founder of the Buena Vista Winery in Sonoma, visited Europe to collect some 100,000 vines and cuttings, some of which defied classification. Haraszthy distributed the vines throughout California, including, according to his son Arpad, the mysterious "Zinfandel" variety, whose European counterpart has yet to be identified. ("Winemaking in California," Overland Review 1871-72)

Arpad Haraszthy was to acquire the original Orleans Hill Vinicultural Association in the western hills of the Sacramento valley. Arpad produced wines designed for use as cuvees (blends) for his Eclipse Champagne, produced in San Francisco. For his premium champagne he was to use the peeled Zinfandel and the Orleans, a riesling-like variety from France.

The Eclipse Grand Prize was described in a Haraszthy advertisement as "A medium dry, full flavored, fine bodied wine, and highly prized by all for these elegant qualities." In another advertisement concerning Arpad's Zinfandel cuvees, we find: "We take great pride in recommending our pure and really superior Champagnes to the public generally. They are produced exactly as are all the high grade French Champagnes, by fermentation in the bottle, but, differently from their foreign competitors, are neither strengthened with spirits, nor flavored up in any manner, but are absolutely pure, and therefore, even when indiscreetly used, will never produce a headache." Eclipse Champagne had the unusual distinction of being named after a popular cigar, a high-quality Havana,

which, in turn, took its name from a famous Galway race-horse.

Many have taken issue with the claim that the Zinfandel grape was brought to California by Agoston Haraszthy, as he took his famous European trip in 1861, yet Bill Betram, currently winemaker at the D'Agostini winery, asserts that plantings of Zinfandel were first made when the winery was established in 1856. Leon Sobon, owner of the prestigious Shenandoah Vineyards in Plymouth, asserts that plantings of Zinfandel in California's Shenandoah Valley were probably made as early as 1854. Some of Amador County's vineyardists, whose families are fifth generation Californians, hold that cuttings of the Zinfandel vine were first brought overland from New York and Michigan.

Whatever the source, Zinfandel was widely planted in the foothills east of Sacramento, and dating from the early 1860's it was being produced on a large scale for blending with other reds in the making of "claret." Charles Nordoff in his book *California for Health, Pleasure, and Residence* (Harper Brothers, 1875), shares:

"On our way through Tuolumne County, at Columbia, a hamlet among the mountains, our stage coach was stopped to water the horses. As the day was warm some of us asked for water for ouselves, whereupon a man standing at the gate of the farmhouse remarked, 'If you prefer wine, there is a wine-cellar at the house.'

"Accordingly we walked up to the house and found a cellar well stocked with wine — a red wine which they call claret here, but which is thin, and to my taste too strong for claret, and a very sweet angelica, almost like syrup. Both kinds were drawn for four or five of us, freely, and the charge for all, modestly asked, was 'six bits' — seventy-five cents. For a bottle of 'claret' to be taken away, seventy-five cents was also demanded. The man had an excellent vineyard; you could see the vine on all the hilltops in this and the adjoining counties."

Indeed, at the time of Nordoff's writing there were nearly 100 vineyards and wineries extending from Mariposa

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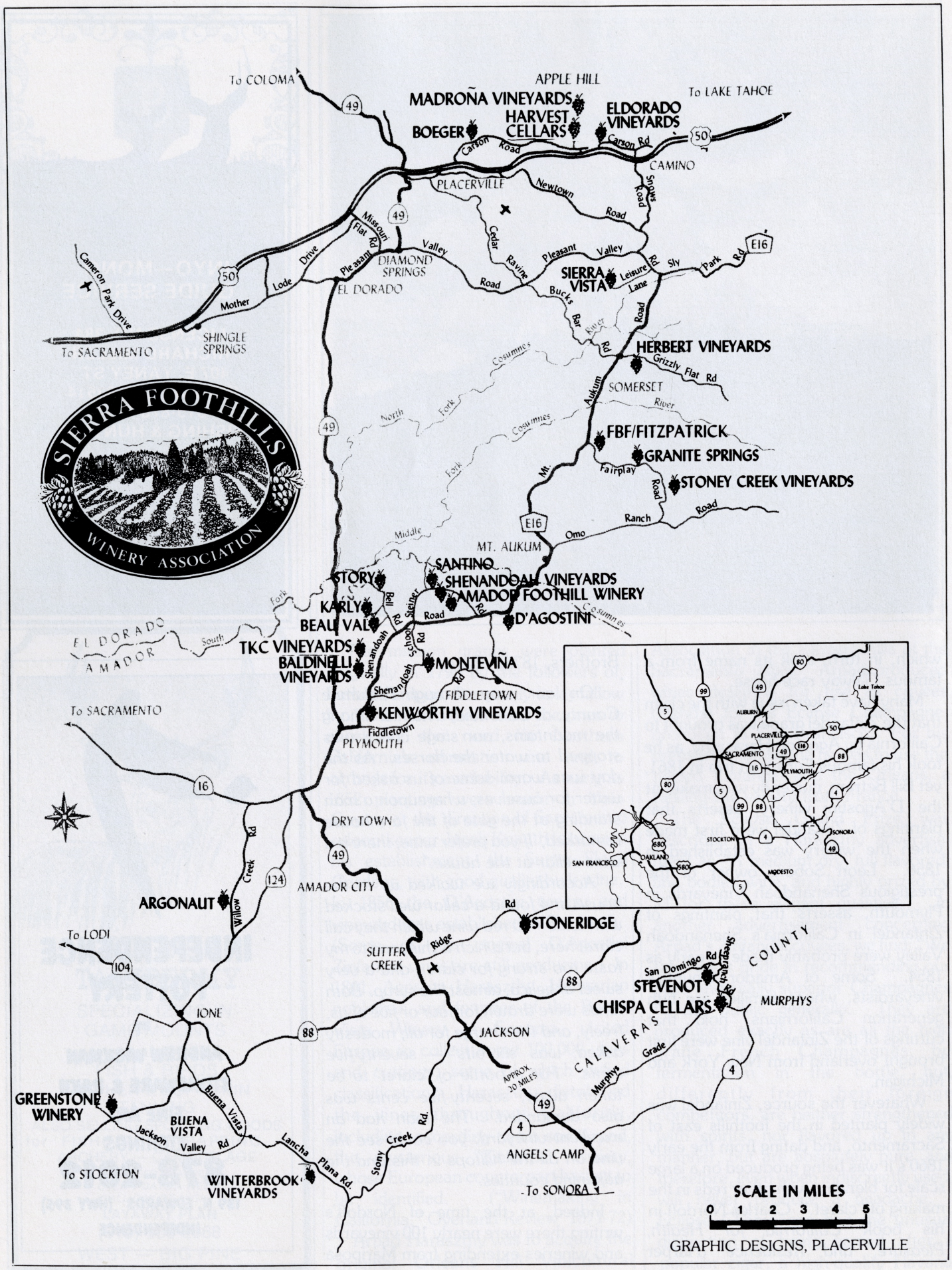
SIERRA FOOTHILLS
WINERY ASSOCIATION
To COLOMA
APPLE HILL
MADROÑA VINEYARDS
HARVEST CELLARS
ELDORADO VINEYARDS
To LAKE TAHOE
BOEGER
Carson Road
Carson Rd
CAMINO
PLACERVILLE
Newtown Road
Snows Road
Missouri Flat Rd
Cedar Ravine
Pleasant Valley Road
Pleasant Valley Rd
SIERRA VISTA
Leisure Lane
Sly Park Rd
E16
DIAMOND SPRINGS
EL DORADO
Cameron Park Drive
Mother Lode Drive
SHINGLE SPRINGS
To SACRAMENTO
Bucks Bar Road
Bucks Bar Rd
HERBERT VINEYARDS
Grizzly Flat Rd
SOMERSET
Cosumnes River
North Fork Cosumnes
Auburn Ravine Rd
FBF/FITZPATRICK
GRANITE SPRINGS
Fairplay Road
STONEY CREEK VINEYARDS
Mt. Aukum Road
Ranch Road
Middle Fork Cosumnes
MT. AUKUM
Omo Ranch
SANTINO
STORY
SHENANDOAH VINEYARDS
AMADOR FOOTHILL WINERY
KARLY
BEAU VAL
Sleiger Rd
Road
D'AGOSTINI
EL DORADO
AMADOR
South Fork Cosumnes
TKC VINEYARDS
BALDINELLI VINEYARDS
Shenandoah School Rd
MONTEVIÑA
Shenandoah Rd
FIDDLETOWN
KENWORTHY VINEYARDS
To SACRAMENTO
Fiddletown
PLYMOUTH
DRY TOWN
Willow Creek Rd
ARGONAUT
AMADOR CITY
Ridge Rd
STONERIDGE
To LODI
SUTTER CREEK
San Domingo Rd
Shenandoah Rd
COUNTY
STEVENOT
CHISPA CELLARS
MURPHYS
IONE
JACKSON
CALAVERAS
Murphys Grade
APPROX. 20 MILES
GREENSTONE WINERY
BUENA VISTA
Buena Vista
Jackson Valley Rd
Lancha Plana Rd.
Stony Creek Rd
ANGELS CAMP
To STOCKTON
WINTERBROOK VINEYARDS
To SONORA
SCALE IN MILES
0 1 2 3 4 5
GRAPHIC DESIGNS, PLACERVILLE

KEY TO WINE VARIETIES

ZN	— ZINFANDEL	**RC**	— RUBY CABERNET	**CL**	— CLARET
CS	— CABERNET SAUVIGNON	**CD**	— CHARDONNAY	**DM**	— DRY MUSCAT
SB	— SAUVIGNON BLANC	**PS**	— PETITE SIRAH	**ST**	— SAUTERNE
CB	— CHENIN BLANC	**GW**	— GERWERTZTRAMINER	**BG**	— BURGUNDY
WZ	— WHITE ZINFANDEL	**JR**	— JOHANNISBURG RIESLING	**FC**	— FRENCH COLOMBARD
ML	— MERLOT	**BB**	— BARBERA	**SM**	— SEMILLON

AMADOR FOOTHILL WINERY 12500 Steiner Rd, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-6307. Normally open weekends; check by phone. Tour energy efficient winery. Picnic facilities available. ZN WZ CB SB

ARGONAUT WINERY 13675 Mt Echo Dr, Ione, Ca 95640 (209)274-4106 or 274-2882. Small winery producing 2000 to 3000 cases annually of Zinfandel, Barbera, Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc. Visitors welcome; please call for hours and directions.

BALDINELLI VINEYARDS Rt 2, Box 7A, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-3398. 7,000 case capacity of estate bottled wines from 70 acres of Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Sauvignon Blanc vineyards, some vines over 60 yrs old. Tasting and tours Sat-Sun 11am to 4 pm and by appointment.

BEAU VAL 10671 Valley Dr, off Bell Rd, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-3281. Open by appointment. Small family-run winery founded in 1979, producing limited releases of Zinfandel, White Zinfandel and Sauvignon Blanc.

BOEGER WINERY 1709 Carson Rd, Placerville, Ca 95667 (916)622-8094. Open Wed thru Sun, 10am to 5pm. No appointment necessary to taste wines all year in the historic 1872 stone wine cellar. Visitors are welcome to lunch in the picnic grounds, shaded by ancient fig trees. ZN CS SB CB WZ ML CD JR

CHISPA CELLARS PO Box 255, Murphys, Ca 95247 (209)728-2106 Corner of French Gulch Rd and Murphys Grade at end of Main St. Housed in an old feed store, Chispa, established in 1976, produces primarily Zinfandel from foothill-grown grapes. Informal tours by appointment or by chance.

D'AGOSTINI WINERY Shenandoah Rd, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-6612. Tours, tasting daily 9 to 4:30pm except major holidays. State Historical Landmark. Winery and vineyard established 1856. Some original Zinfandel vines still in production. Handmade oak casks and hand hewned beams are still part of winery. ZN BG CL ST DM

ELDORADO VINEYARDS 3551 Carson Rd, PO Box 617, Camino, Ca 95709 (916)644-3773. Open daily 10-4pm Sept thru Dec. Most Sat & Sun afternoons rest of year (call first) or by appointment. Since 1976, family operated winery producing ZN CB CD and apple wine. Visitors welcome to picnic.

FBF WINERY Fairplay Rd, Somerset, Ca 95684 (209)245-3248 or (916)626-1988. Owned and operated by Bertram & Fitzpatrick families. Limited production of fine varietal wines from select vineyards of El Dorado and Amador Counties. Tasting room open weekends 11-5. Visitors always welcome by appointment. Scenic picnic areas. ZN CS WZ CB CD SB

GRANITE SPRINGS WINERY off Fairplay Rd at 6060 Granite Springs Rd, Somerset, Ca 95684 (209)245-6395. Tasting 11-5pm weekends and by appointment. Hillside vineyards of Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chenin Blanc and Petite Sirah. Picnic area by the pond.

GREENSTONE WINERY Hwy 88 and Jackson Valley Rd, PO Box 1164, Ione, Ca 95640 (209) 274-2238. Located at the gateway to the Sierra Foothills wine country. Open for tasting, informal tours and sales. Oak-shaded picnic areas. RV's welcome. Sat & Sun 11-4; July & Aug, 10-5 Wed thru Sun.

HARVEST CELLARS Premium Dry Apple Wine. PO Box 2279, Placerville, Ca 95667 (916)626-3480. Wine tasting Sept 3-Jan 1, 11-5 daily at High Hill Ranch on Carson Rd near Madrona Vineyards. Write or call for other retail outlets and tastings.

HERBERT VINEYARDS PO Box 438, Somerset, Ca 95684 (916)626-0548 Located on scenic hilltop land at about 2400-foot elevation. We offer limited releases of premium wines made exclusively from our own Zinfandel grapes. Open by appointment. Call or write for names of retailers carrying our wines.

KARLY WINES off Bell Rd, Box 721, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-3922. Isolated winery and estate vineyards cleared from oak woodland. Zinfandel and Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay from Santa Maria Valley. Small bottlings of experimental varieties available only at winery. Open by appointment.

KENWORTHY VINEYARDS Shenandoah Rd, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-3198. Open Sunday 12-5 or by appointment. Limited quantities of premium wines produced from Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay grapes. Winemaking style provides dry, rich, full-bodied table wines with optimum bottle aging potential.

MADRONA VINEYARDS Gatlin Rd, PO Box 454, Camino, Ca 95709 (916)644-5948. Open Sat 10-5 and Sun 1-5 April thru December or by appointment. Estate bottled, El Dorado County wines produced from our own 3000-ft-elevation vineyards of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel, Chardonnay and White Riesling.

MONTEVIÑA Shenandoah School Rd, Rt 2 Box 30-A, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-6942. Amador County's leading producer of premium Estate Bottled varietals. Visitors welcome daily 11am-4pm. Large groups by appointment. ZN SB CD CS RC WZ WC BB SM

PIGEON CREEK Clockspring Vineyards PO Box 355, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-3297. Located in Amador County at 1600-foot elevation. Premium wines produced from our vineyards of Zinfandel and Sauvignon Blanc. Call or write for appointment and directions to see our 350 acres of vineyards. Sorry, no tasting facilities.

SANTINO WINERY 12225 Steiner Rd, Plymouth Ca 95669 (209)245-3555 or 245-3711. Informal winery tours and tasting weekdays 10-4 and weekends 12-4 (phone first) or by appointment. ZN WZ CS SB

SHENANDOAH VINEYARDS 12300 Steiner Rd, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-3698. Open 11-5 daily May to Oct; 11-4 Sat & Sun Nov to April, weekdays, please call. 10 varieties of award-winning wines to please all palates. Established in 1977, small family estate, dedicated to quality.

SIERRA VISTA WINERY from Diamond Springs follow Pleasant Valley Rd for 10 miles to Pleasant Valley. Turn right on Leisure Ln. Go 2 miles to winery at 4560 Cabernet Way. Open Sat & Sun 11-5 or by appointment. (916)622-7221. CS SB WZ CB CD ZN

STEVENOT San Domingo Rd, PO Box 548, Murphys, Ca 95247 (209)728-3436. Open year-round 10am-5pm Winery housed in restored hay barn. Picnic area available. CS ZN WZ CB CD SB

STONERIDGE 13862 Ridge Rd East, Sutter Creek, Ca 95685 (209)223-1761. Open Sat 12-4 and most Sun 12-4 or by appointment. Picnic area available. Small family-operated winery and vineyards, founded in 1975. Estate bottlings of ZN WZ RC

STONEY CREEK VINEYARDS located in southern El Dorado Co, ½ mi south of historic Fairplay at 8221 Stoney Creek Rd, Somerset, Ca 95684 (209)245-3467. Founded in 1979 by the Gerwer family. Tasting weekends 11-4. Picnic area. Presently planted Ruby Cabernet, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Petite Sirah. ZN WZ RC SB SM PS

STORY VINEYARD 10851 Bell Rd, Plymouth, Ca 95669 (209)245-6208 or 245-6827. Small family-owned vineyards and winery established in 1973. Produces Zinfandel and white table wines. Tasting by appointment. Oak shaded picnic area available.

TKC VINEYARDS Route 2 Box 8L Plymouth, Ca 95669 (619)446-3166. Open by appointment only. Offering limited releases of premium quality Zinfandel. Small family-run winery founded in 1981.

Since many of the wineries on the tour are small, often with limited personnel, winery hours may vary.

Brian Fitzpatrick and partner at the press

Photo courtesy of Fitzpatrick Winery

County in the south to Butte County in the north, and taking in Tuolumne, Calaveras, Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sutter, and Nevada Counties as the early Sierra Foothill wine region. In those days it was commonly referred to as the El Dorado wine region. The majority of the early Sierra Foothill wine activity was in El Dorado County.

Moreover, the California Mother Lode area was loosely referred to as El Dorado, that is until the placer mining operations began to bottom out.

Many of the early Sierra Foothill vineyards were plowed under following the great wine depression of 1886, caused by overplanting and an underestimation of the European recovery from phylloxera.

The decline in placer mining brought with it a commensurate decline in the local demand for wine. (Let us not forget that the mining town of Jackson, California, was once called Bottleira, for the great amount of casks and bottles left by the miners along Jackson Creek.) Prohibitive railroad rates impeded a shifting of markets to compensate for the local decline; the Central Pacific Railroad charged as much as $4.80 to ship a $2.40 case of wine out of state.

"Prohibition" brought disaster to those few that had survived. The remaining story, then, of the Sierra Foothill wineries and the wine for which the region is best noted (Zinfandel) begins after 1970, when the surge of consumer demand for premium California wines caused the opening of many new wineries outside the "traditional" Napa-Sonoma region.

If you were to take Highway 49 north from Sonora, California until you reached Coloma, you would be passing through not only some of the most interesting of the California Mother Lode country but you would be given the opportunity to visit some twenty-six Sierra Foothill wineries, mostly family-owned and full of gold country ambiance. Although this tri-county area (Calaveras-Amador-El Dorado) is best known for its production of Zinfandels — both red and white — many other fine wines are available. Since Nordoff's day the price has risen considerably from the six-bits he paid per bottle of "claret;" however, bottle for bottle you can select from among some 17 varietals which are competitive with those of Napa-Sonoma and about $2 to $3 less per varietal.

My experience has been that the tasting privileges afforded by the Sierra Foothill wineries are most liberal and the hospitality more informal than that associated with "traditional" wine-tourist areas. The wineries themselves abound with shaded picnic grounds, or there are many nearby backroads to take your picnic and bottle of local zin to lupine filled fields and cool creeks. More often than not you'll enjoy a taste of the local vintage poured by the vintner or a member of the family. No large corporations here — these are family run operations built by people who took risks in uprooting their families, quitting their jobs and moving to the foothills in the 1970's. Winemaking requires risk and a lot of love.

Like the people who make the wine, wine grapes thrive on risk. The tension of hot days and cool nights, of roots probing the cobbly soil for moisture, of grape leaves canopying the fruit from the summer sun gives a yield in character. Even before the wineries of the Sierra Foothills were established in the mid-1970's, Zinfandel grapes from Amador and El Dorado Counties were being purchased by wineries in other regions, some as much as 300 miles away. Why? Character.

Red Zinfandel at its best carries an undertaste of "raspberry" or "blackberry." Like Beaujolais or Chianti it may be appreciated when relatively new. Yet it improves with age. According to Marcus Graziano, General Manager of Mansion Cellars, whose Sacramento and Davis cellars offer a wide range of California wines, the Sierra Zin at its best is "jammy" and complex. It surpasses the "berry" trait without being overbearing. The color is deep purple or ruby.

Sierra Zins fall into two categories. Some are full bodied, earthy, high in tannin when young, and may have an undertaste of cherries or chocolate. These require respectable bottle aging. Others are well-fined, with wood overtones, and carry an undertaste of raspberry with a trace of bell-pepper. These can be consumed when relatively new. Wine consumers are divided as to which category they

An old plow rests near the D'Agostini Vineyards

The road to Fiddletown

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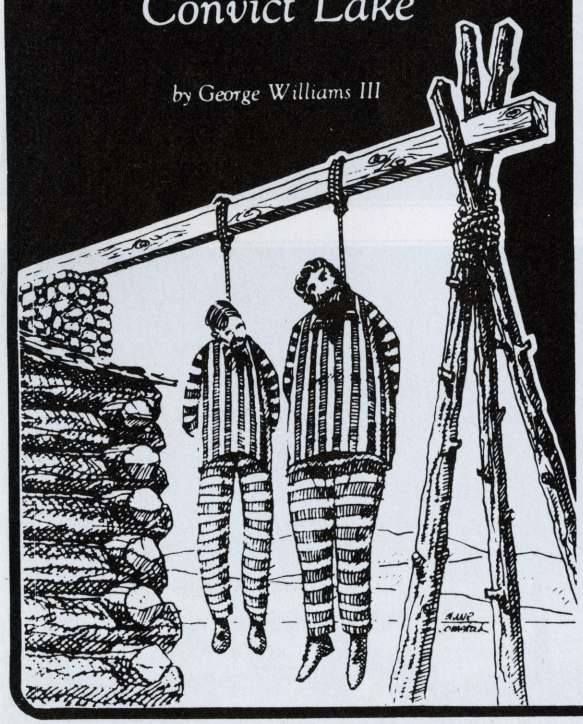
The Murders At Convict Lake

by George Williams III



NEW BOOK

THE MURDERS AT CONVICT LAKE

by George Williams III.

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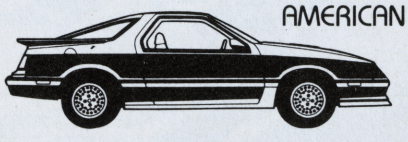
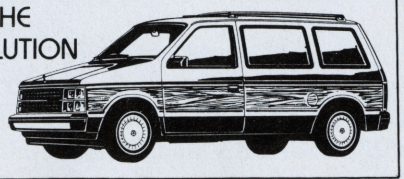



prefer. Hence, several wineries, including Amador Foothill, Boeger, Granite Springs, Montevina and several Shenandoah have produced both types. The Fitzpatrick Winery, by virtue of its size and the entrepreneurship of its owner, may in a given year produce several Zinfandels, each designated by vineyard. For example, in 1981 Fitzpatrick produced Zinfandels from Clockspring Vineyard, Rock Hill Vineyard, and Jeling Vineyard — all from the Shenandoah Valley appellation. Brian Fitzpatrick, partner in the winery, explained, "I'm willing to produce as little as 96 cases from a given vineyard. Sometimes I might produce Zinfandels from three or more vineyards, concurrently. As they mature, I experiment with blending rations (still 100% Zin). If the blends I produce do not exceed the quality of the constituents, I bottle them separately and so designate." Clearly, a practice such as the above, beneficial to a stalker-of-Zin, could not be followed by the larger wineries.

Although the Story Vineyard does not offer regular tasting privileges — special arrangements must be made by telephone — I must relate the following tasting experience: Since Dr. Story's death, the winery has been operated by Vinformation, a lessee who employs the same help. Vinformation had sent me a brochure and invited me to try their Zin at the Story Winery in Shenandoah Valley. I phoned the winery one day to say that I was on my way. They hadn't heard from Vinformation about me, but said "come on, anyway."

Mike Multanado could disarm any wine snob with his unassuming manner and gray-striped coveralls with matching railroad cap. (You were expecting a sommelier?) Mike and his father moved up to the Shenandoah Valley because they fell in love with the land. Prior to serving an apprenticeship with Dr. Story, he had worked as a welder and mechanic in nearby Plymouth.

Upon entering the winery, Mike discovered much to his dismay that the paraphernalia had been locked up by a co-worker who had left the shift early. Undaunted, he took a long ladder and a thieve, and climbed up near the rafters of the winery to siphon off some Story, 1982 Zinfandel from atop a steel tank.

Brian Fitzpatrick and Bill Bertram, co-owners of FBF/Fitzpatrick Winery, offer a few vintages to wine tasters.

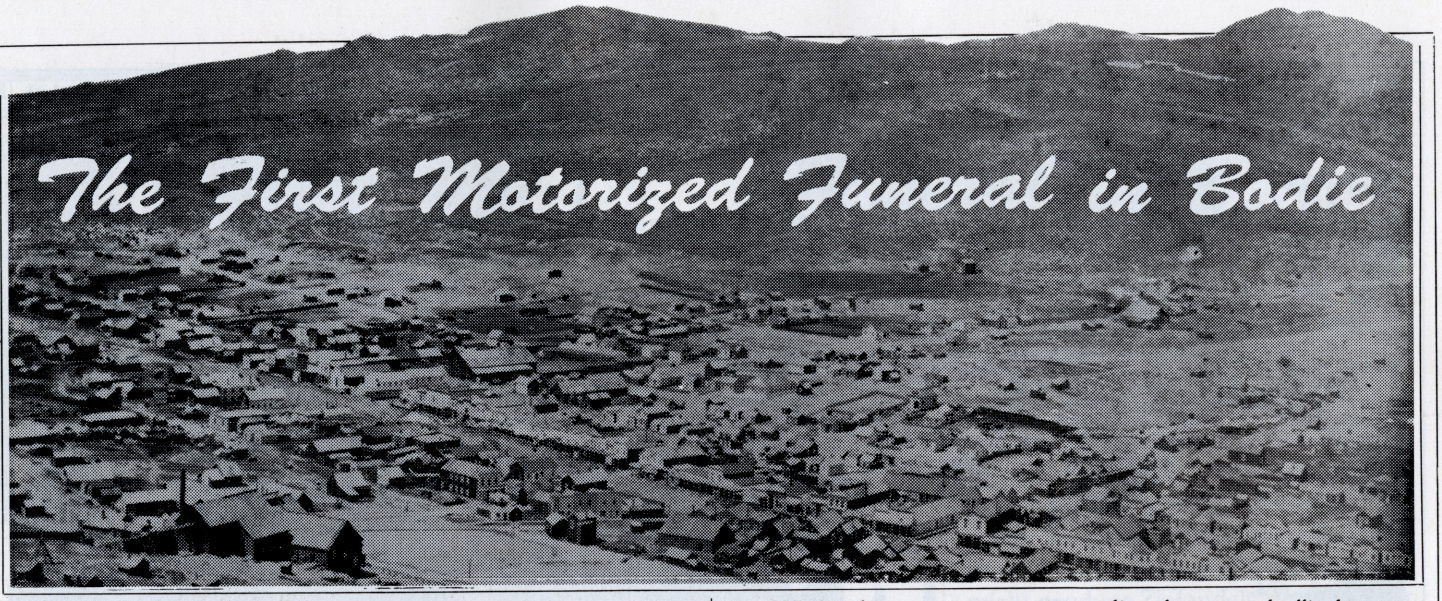
Down from the tank, Mike gave me a glass of somewhat foamy Zin, purple in color with a slight brick fringe. It had a lot of fruit in it, with a smooth finish. (Be assured the foam was only from the trip down the ladder.) This Zin will be released late in '84 and will prove to be quite drinkable when new, even from the bottle.

Likewise Barden Stevenot's Zinfandel from Stevenot Winery, (Murphys, Calaveras County) is drinkable when young. It is well rounded and has a subtle complexity of wood and wild blackberry. Located in a small valley off Sheepranch Road, this rustically set winery is worth visiting for both the scenic drive and the wine. Stevenot's Zinfandels are affordable food wines, good with duck, roast, or cheese. If you're a backroads person, there are plenty of by-ways to take as you leave the Stevenot Winery. You can take the Sheepranch Road into Mountain Ranch-San Andreas or Rail Road Flat-Jesus Maria Road into Mokelumne Hill.

With Sierra Zins, alcohol may range from 10.5% to about 14.8%, but at the Stoneridge Winery, between Jackson and Sutter Creek, I had a '78 Zinfandel that was 15.6% alcohol. (The locals refer to this Zinfandel as "Vacation Port," as the owners, Gary and Loretta Porteous, were on vacation when the grapes came into heavy sugar.) They returned to a vineyard that was quite raisiny, but managed to harvest a Zinfandel that is ruby-brown in color and port-like with burnt vanilla and chutney undertastes. Stoneridge is a much appreciated "hobby" winery, producing about 2,000 gallons per year. Gary Porteous maintains two other jobs in addition to this "hobby."

As mentioned previously, Shenandoah Vineyards offers both types of Zinfandel. The bigger Zins are described as "wines of an earthy, ripe cherry taste and aroma, often a chocolatey flavor." Shenandoah Zins tend to be deep purple with some brick fringe. They are big in taste, high in tannin. Some have a chocolate-covered raspberry undertaste. Shenandoah's 1979 Regular Zinfandel Wine recently won the Grand Award at the Amador County Fair. Founded by Leon Sobon, a former engineer and home-winemaker from Los Altos, Shenandoah Vineyards is situated on part of the old Steiner Ranch, which once extended throughout one county. Leon and Shirley Sobon's 54-acre vineyard is a family run venture, with their six children, aged 12 to 22, offering assistance. Sobon buys his Zinfandel grapes from a neighbor, John Downing, whose 108 year-old vineyard is the oldest in California. In addition to several Zinfandels, Shenandoah offers an award-winning Port of Zinfandel, and a vintage Port. Shenandoah's white Zinfandel won early recognition when consumer demand exceeded the supply available from Sutter Home and Montevina.

Continued on page 66



The First Motorized Funeral in Bodie

Photo courtesy of the Mono County Museum

The funeral rate of Bodie's early days was high due to the rough ways of living and the delays for medical attention caused by slow, poor transportation, although the hospital was a very good one and well equipped by the mining company.

The horse-drawn funeral hearse used in Bodie was a fancy one. It stood high with five large tassels on top of it, one on each corner and one in the center. With the exception of the corner posts, the sides and end walls were of solid glass.

The front end of the hearse was fastened to the front wheels by a single yoke high enough to go over the front wheels so as to be able to make short turns. On top of the yoke was the driver's seat, high in the air—much higher than the ordinary wagons.

The entire hearse was painted a shiny black including the wheels, with the exception of a few lines of gold trimming here and there. It also had two oil lamps about the size of large coffee pots mounted on the side of the driver's seat. The sight of the hearse was much different than that of ordinary wagons, and when the horses saw it they wanted no part of it; every time we had a funeral it was a big job to get the horses hitched to the hearse. They would kick, snort, and run around in circles, and when the funeral got under way they wanted to run. The driver just couldn't hold them back, but there wasn't anything else to do but hold them in line as much as possible and get the funeral over with as fast as we could. That's what the horses wanted more than anything else.

In 1922 an old-timer of Bodie passed away. His name was Jim Milatich, a very fine man. Jim had been a town official and had done much for the town in general, and he was liked by everyone, young and old. Several Bodie businessmen talked over the funeral arrangements with the undertaker. The idea was to give Milatich a nice funeral and try to keep the horses from acting up. Because the death rate at this time had dropped off considerably, the horses acting up seemed certain, and to have anything but a well conducted funeral for Milatich would have been an insult to a very good man's reputation.

While these men were standing by a potbellied stove where Milatich had spent many hours discussing town problems, the matter of giving him a good funeral seemed more important. One suggestion after another was volunteered with no results.

Then something happened that relieved the strain and was very welcome. Jim Cain, the banker, walked in and told the men that he had just seen Joe Scanavino drive by in his Model "T" pickup truck. Cain suggested to the men that they put the coffin in Joe's truck and let him take it to the cemetery and not bother with the horses. The others all agreed.

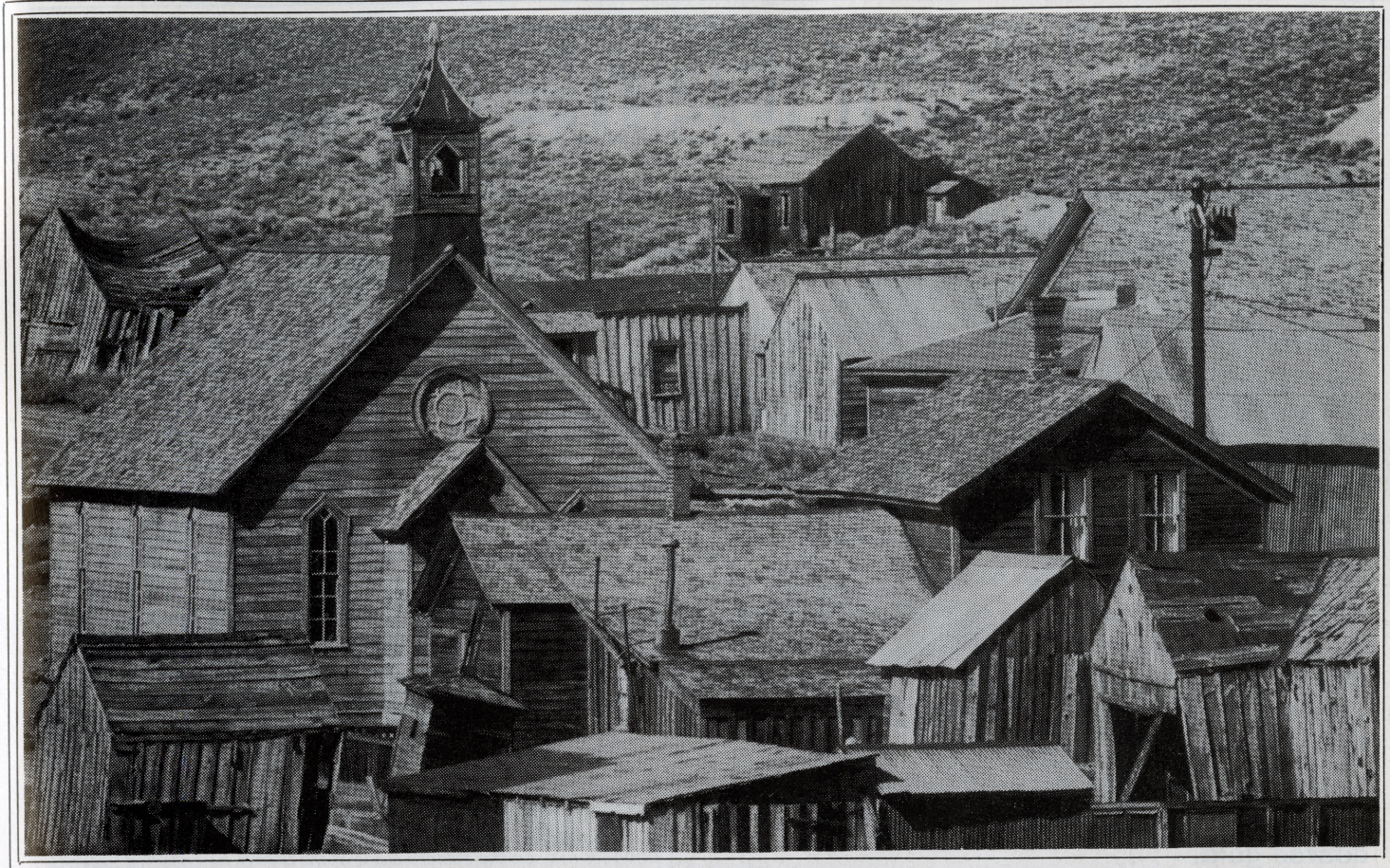
The undertaker told the men that Joe took very good care of that Model"T". He was always tuning it up, he said, and it ran like a sewing machine and never missed.

When Joe came over to the store, the men brought up the idea. Joe replied that he would do anything to give Milatich a nice, quiet funeral. He said Milatich was always looking forward to progress and he was sure Jim would have liked the honor of having the first funeral by motor power.

The man who was to drive the horses was certainly pleased to get relieved of that job, and he said he was glad the Milatich funeral would be one of the best Bodie had ever conducted. All agreed and drinks were served.

The Model "T" was then decorated with all sorts of black cloth. Flowers were tied onto the sides, the top, and even the wheels.

The funeral was set for 2 p.m. Many people were there and services were held at the Mineral Union Hall. Joe parked his Model "T" a block away from the hall and waited to be called. When the services were over the casket was carried out and set down on the porch in front of the hall's door. Joe was signalled to come, and it was necessary for him to turn around and back up to the porch. This was a short steep climb, and the porch was at the same level as the back end of the Model"T" with its tail gate down. Joe turned around and started to back up to the porch, but about halfway the engine started to miss. He lost power, so he had to pull ahead and try it again, but again he had no success. The engine was firing alternately on one, two and three cylinders. At least six tries were made with the same results.



Jim Stroup photo

Then a bystander whispered to Joe to go further out in the field, get some back-up running speed, and then give it the gas with the throttle wide open. Since any suggestion was welcome by that time, Joe did just that.

When he got about halfway up the hill, all four cylinders went to work with the throttle wide open, and the pickup went back so fast and struck the porch with such great force that it unbalanced the undertaker who was standing near the porch's edge. He fell forward face down in the pickup, struck his face on the floor and was knocked unconscious. Joe heard the noise but thought it was the casket being loaded in. Several people waved and yelled not to move when they saw the undertaker fall, but Joe thought they were telling him to go ahead to the cemetery. He thought they were afraid the engine would die and that he might not get it started again, so he took off. About a hundred men, women and children standing outside the hall started to run after Joe hollering for him to stop, but with the roar of the engine on one to three cylinders, Joe could only hear their shouts, and to him it sounded like "keep going and don't stop."

He kept going and was pulling away from the people pursuing him. About fifty cowboys who had come on horseback to attend the funeral saw that the others were losing the race, so they jumped on their horses and took after him. By this time several hundred people plus the ones on horseback trying to stop Joe got the narrow streets and roads blocked. Some took routes between buildings, the ones on horseback took routes through the sagebrush, and kids climbed on building roofs; the streets, roads, and surrounding hills on the way to the cemetery was plastered with townsfolk and men and women on horseback, but Joe beat them all to the cemetery.

He pulled up alongside the open grave and set the brakes, feeling very glad that the engine hadn't stalled on him on the way. After setting the brakes, he turned and glanced back just at the same time the undertaker regained consciousness and raised up a bit. The man's entire face was covered with blood, and his nose was smashed in. Joe, still thinking he had the casket on the truck, thought the body of the deceased had been thrown out. He didn't stop to ask any questions, but took off running across the cemetery with strides that took him over all the fences.

Just about this time, the men on horses arrived and saw Joe going flying across the cemetery, so they took after him. He saw them coming and thought they were trying to catch him to punish him for messing up Milatich's funeral. Joe often won foot races at celebration contests, so he wasn't easy to catch. In fact he was halfway out of town when they caught up with him and brought him back to get his Model "T" and start all over.

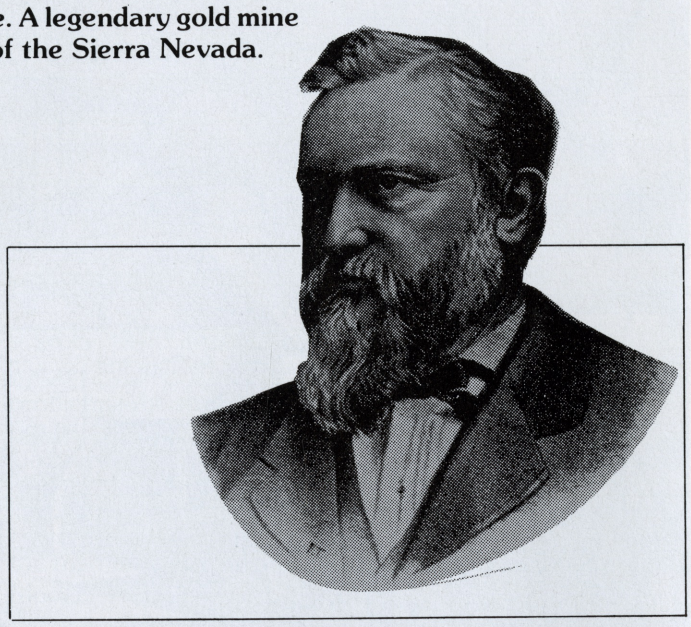
When they got back, they found out why the vehicle hadn't been running so well. Joe always carried a five-gallon can of water and a five-gallon can of gasoline in his pickup. While the pickup was being wrapped in black cloth before the funeral, one of the boys who was trying to help had put the five gallons of water in the gas tank instead of the gasoline. After the gas tank was straightened out, the funeral went on in very good order, except for being an hour late. □

THE LOST CEMENT MINE

By special arrangement with the publisher, Genny Smith Books, SIERRA LIFE presents a series of excerpts from *The Lost Cement Mine*. A legendary gold mine supposedly discovered in 1857 on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada.

By James W.A. Wright
Edited by Genny Smith.
Illustrated by Nina Kelly

For over a century now the desert country east of the Sierra has been the scene of countless quests for the elusive fortunes of "lost mines." One of the oldest and most sought after of these is the evasive gold ledge known as the "Lost Cement." Legend places this bonanza somewhere along the rugged eastern slope of the Sierra about the headwaters of the Owens River and describes it as a wide curbstone of reddish cement, richly bejeweled with nuggets of coarse gold.



James W.A. Wright came to Mammoth City in the summer of 1879. He came both as a prospective investor and as a mining correspondent. During his stay on the eastern slope of the Sierra, he collected notes for the history of the Cement Hunters which he wrote on his return to Hanford that fall.

In the summer of 1857 a party of emigrants, on their way to the gold fields of California, by the southern route, reached Death Valley. In braving its then unknown terrors and attempting to cross, they met with disaster such as too often overtook those who decended into this hot, parched, alkali-covered chasm. Nor can we wonder at its fatality and the painful sufferings of those pioneers who succeeded in crossing it, when we remember that a well equipped part of United States surveyors, who entered it in 1874, were glad to come out after 48 hours of most trying experience, by which they learned that the temperature of its close atmosphere did not in such seasons fall below 117 degrees Fahrenheit at midnight, while its day time heat and glare were so intense as almost to craze men and horses.

In its depths two men of this emigrant party lost their teams, and had to leave their wagons and outfits. They kept with the train, however, till they were nearing the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada. When they reached a point in what is now Owen's valley, they were told by their comrades that it was only about sixty miles directly across these mountains to where the gold digging was going on, but that the wagons must take the much longer route towards the north to find a suitable crossing. The two men then left the train on foot, and started with their packs for the Nevadas. They came to the head of a stream supposed to be the Owen's river, and in traveling through "the burnt country" they sat down to rest. Some say this was near a spring or stream. Here they observed a curious looking rock, which they commenced pounding. They saw in it a good deal of what appeared to be gold. There was so much, in fact, that they discussed the question whether it was gold or not. One insisted that it was, the other laughed at him. The one believing it was gold took about ten pounds of the rock with him. Reaching another stream, beyond the divide, they crossed these rough mountains successfully by following the river down, and it brought them out at Millerton. Hence, this is known to have been the San Joaquin. There they found mining going on and tried their fortunes. After a time they separated. The one with the lump of ore was unsuccessful in the mines, and finally made his way to San Francisco.

A year or two passed. He was taken down by consumption, and placed himself for treatment under a Dr. Randall. He gradually grew worse, until when past all hope of recovery, he one day requested the doctor to hand him a

satchel that hung near his bed. From it he took what was left of the lump of ore that he had brought from the divide between Owen's River and the San Joaquin. He told the doctor he had learned with certainty at Millerton that it was gold, and had hoped to return some day to the place where he had found it, and to enjoy the rich profits of the treasure which lay buried there. Now he knew he could not, and gave the remnant to the doctor, as all that he could pay him for his attentions. Yet, as a further return for his services, he gave him a minute description of the locality where he found it, saying it was on a stream heading in the Nevadas on the opposite side from the San Joaquin river. He also made a rough map for him, fixing the exact place, as nearly as he could, before his death.

This valuable secret was thus made the sole property of Dr. Randall in the fall of 1860. Having full faith in the earnest statement of a dying man, and having tangible and convincing evidence from the rich specimens he possessed, that such gold bearing cement did exist and was more than half gold, he quietly determined to tell no one, but to make thorough search for it the next year. This specimen is described by those who saw it afterwards, as a reddish, rusty looking cement, not unlike decomposed quartz, and thickly spangled with flakes of purest gold.

Meanwhile, the first settlement by white men near Mono lake had been made in 1857, on the Virginia creek, the east fork of Walker's river. This was called Dogtown. The next spring, all hands, except John Richter, moved thence to where the new town of Mono was located, on the north side of Mono lake, and as regards the present flourishing towns of Bodie and Mammoth City, about 11 miles southwest of the former and 45 miles north of the latter. Rich placer diggings were found there, but were soon worked out. In those days there were at least 1,000 people in and around Mono. Aurora, Nevada - 18 miles northwest - had also become quite an enterprising mining center.

In 1861, amid lively times, quite a stir was created in this mining camp of Mono by the arrival of a stranger, who was soon learned to be a Dr. Randall from San Francisco. It then became known that he wished to employ some one to go out prospecting with him in a certain direction. He engaged a man, and with him went out and located a quarter section of land on "Pumice flat," some 37 miles south of Mono, and about 8 miles north of where Mammoth City now stands. He was pronounced by the miners a fool for making such a location, and he gave no reason for it at that time, except that he liked the looks of the country. This is the place that afterwards became known as Gid Whiteman's Camp.

The following spring Dr. Randall returned, bringing a man with him. He then employed as fellow prospector and foreman Gid Whiteman, and a force of 11 other men. From that date Gid became the head man in this search, and lives and searches around there even now. This time he brought a map with him, and, using it as a guide, he and these men thoroughly prospected his 160 acres. He found some reddish lava, or cement, as it was then and has ever since been commonly called through all that

region. Believing he had found the outcroppings of the valuable ledge from which his gold-bearing cement came, he placed in possession the man he had brought with him. He immediately returned to Mono and showed, for the first time, some fine rock — a reddish cement. It was undoubtedly rich in gold. Many reliable people who saw it declare that at least half of it — Mark Twain says two-thirds — was composed of large pure flakes of the precious metal. It is now supposed that this was a piece of the ore the dying man had given him, but, as he told nothing of this, the impression was that he had found it in his late prospecting. A tremendous excitement was the result. Prospectors poured out of Mono and Aurora day and night, watching and dodging each other, dogging each other's steps as they sought eagerly — nay, frenziedly — for such cement. Never was there a greater furor around any mining camp. This was in June of 1862.

Early in 1861 — the very year in the summer of which Dr. Randall made his first search for the "Cement mine," and located "Gid Whiteman's Camp;" and late in the fall of which the Owen's River war began — a stranger came to the town of Mono. His subsequent movements, together with the mysterious and horrible death of another stranger who prospected with him, have ever since been associated by many with the hunt for this same gold-bearing red cement. Bodie papers have lately announced the finding of the head of Hume, a murdered man, in well petrified condition. This head, now unearthed by mining processes, eighteen years after death, belonged to the man who lost his life as above alluded to. It has remarkable history, the main facts of which we will here give, as received from good authority in Mono county last summer.

The newcomer to Mono in the spring of '61 gave his name as Farnsworth. He offered to furnish an outfit and give a share in a rich claim he professed to have found. It is believed he succeeded in getting a man to go with him. Some say they were seen going out of town together, having a small outfit on a horse, both walking. What became of the second man none know.

Farnsworth came back alone, and tried to persuade parties to go with him to a rich carting claim somewhere on Owen's river, generally stating that it was about a day's travel from Mono. No one then made any arrangements with him, as all were busy. He disappeared and afterwards came again with a man said to have come from San Francisco, a drayman, whose name was Hume. The latter had a dray and a large horse. They spent some days making preparations for prospecting. By this

time the Indian troubles were brewing. They got a small outfit and went — no one knew or cared where. Shortly after Farnsworth came back without his hat, and on the horse. He told how they had been attacked by Indians, and the other man was killed. He had a bullet hole through his boot-top, and holes in his clothes that were apparently cut with a pocket knife. He then related all the incidents of an attack near the head of Owen's river.

As he did not tell a very straight story when cross-questioned, the people began to suspect him. The crowds commenced talking about the other man, wondering what had become of him. Like most mining camps in early days, Mono had no officers of the law, but the miners, being a law to themselves, in their usual way appointed men to take Farnsworth in charge till they could make a search for his missing companion. A searching party of thirty men went out with Indians for guides, to track him. They easily traced him to the north branch of Owen's river, now called "Deadman's creek," formerly Hume's crossing, or Murderer's creek. There the Indians found blood, hair and ax marks on a log. No Indian tracks appeared anywhere around. Farnsworth's tracks were traced up and down the creek to where a man's head was found in the water covered with rocks. Near by they found the body covered in the same manner. As soon as the head was found a man was sent back to Mono to have Farnsworth's guard increased till they could return. They buried the body at the root of a pine tree, and carried the head up to Mono the next day. This head was preserved in whiskey, and afterwards identified by Hume's sister, who came up from San Francisco for that purpose.

Unfortunately for the ends of justice Farnsworth escaped that night, while the guard had become drowsy and relaxed their watchfulness. He was traced as far as Honey lake, in what is now called Lassen county, but was not caught, nor have any of the Monoites ever seen or heard of him since. Then the question was asked "What could have been the cause of this bloody deed?" Some surmised that Farnsworth may have tolled Hume out to murder him for his money. But the latter is believed to have had very little with him. Hence it is generally considered more reasonable to conclude that Hume was murdered to prevent his recalling the location of the rich claim, which is thought by many to be identical with the wonderful cement mine which Dr. Randall was looking for.

An invalid named Van Horn was going by boat from Sacramento to San Francisco, and his friends — Carpenter and wife, of Aurora—were with him. His physicians had told him that he might die at any time. On the trip he was taken suddenly ill, and called Carpenter to him. He said he felt that he was sinking, and, perhaps, would not live through the trip. He thanked Carpenter for his great kindness, acknowledging that he had acted like a brother towards him, although he had no reason to think the sick man could make any returns for his careful nursing. Yet he could and

would repay him. He told of his connection with Dr. Randall's expedition in search of the cement. He was cook on that trip. One day the man the Doctor had brought up with him, and who is said to have been the friend of the man who first found the cement, came in, very much excited, when Van Horn was alone. He had always declared the Doctor was looking in the wrong place. He was a German. Finding Van Horn by himself, he said to him, in confidence, "I find dot d—— ting, and I get noting but mine wages." At the same time he pulled out of his pocket a lump of the cement, rich with free gold. Van Horn, full of excitement, told him, "Hush, hide it; we'll fix all that. I get nothing but my wages either." They mutually planned to get discharged next day, complaining to the Doctor that they were dissatisfied and did not see "the use of hunting gold in a country where rocks swim and wood sinks." This referred to the vast amount of pumice scattered all over this volcanic region, and to the mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius)*, a very solid, heavy wood. They packed what few things they had on Van Horn's horse and started out towards Aurora. But, as soon as they were out of sight of camp, they turned to one side and went in the opposite direction, to the place where the Dutchman had found the cement. They dug down only two feet and became terribly excited, because they saw it was more than half gold. They filled a sack with the precious ore; then they quit digging, that they might go and get a good outfit, for they had food for only a few days. They buried their pick, an ax, and other things they would not need till they came back. They covered the exposed part of the cement well with pumice, took a bush and swept it over to deface all marks and made it look as much as possible like the surrounding surface. Then, as they left, one of them walked backward and swept out their tracks. Carefully avoiding Mono and Aurora on their route, they hurried on to a point on Walker's river known as "The Elbow." There they crushed and panned out their sackful of ore, getting in all $30,000.

This amount is by no means incredible, if the ore was over half gold. For the entire weight of the sackful would not have been much, if any more, than 175 pounds, and the horse and two men could easily manage that, and what little else they had to carry. They then went to Virginia, got a winter outfit, took a partner and started back. Meanwhile, about a week after these men left, Gid Whiteman and his party quit work for Dr. Randall, and the latter disappeared from the scene.

Van Horn and his two companions,

on their return to the ground where they had buried their tools, arrived at two P.M. They at once began their preparations for building, cut down some suitable trees and selected the site for their cabin, because they proposed to winter there. The next morning, while at breakfast, the three men were surrounded by Joaquin Jim and thirty of his warriors. The Indians surprised them, took everything they had but an old horse, destroyed the camp and ordered them out; they told them they should not work there; said they had known the place a long time, that what the white men were looking for there was medicine, and the Indians wanted it.

Glad to escape with their lives, the men left, and at a safe distance stopped and made each other a solemn promise to tell nothing of it till they met again, when the Indian war was over. As it continued nearly three years longer, they were scattered and never met again. Two were reported to have gone off to the greater war East with the "California Hundred," as Van Horn believed they had done. The third was the sickly man, Van Horn, who told Carpenter this story, and gave him certain directions for finding the place.

Late in May, 1869, two men arrived in Stockton, as fellow passengers on the overland train. One of them was middle aged. His hair and full beard were slightly tinged with gray. He was above the medium (height) and of powerful physique. His companion appeared to be at least ten years his senior, and of slighter build. They represented that they were from the neighborhood of Salt Lake City, though they had both been in California during its earlier mining days. We shall call them Kent and McDougal, though they then gave different names. They remained in Stockton only long enough to buy a strong, four-horse wagon, four good-sized, half-breed mustangs, well broke to harness and saddle, some mining and other tools, a considerable supply of provisions, a dozen strong packsaddles, and all together a very good outfit for several months of camp life. They were soon on their way by the usual road to Knight's Ferry, and thence along the foothill route to Snelling and by way of Union Postoffice to Jones' store, on the south bank of the San Joaquin. They arrived there about the middle of June. . . Somewhat replenishing their supplies at Jones' store, they at once entered the mountains, going northeast by road to Crane Valley, entering its southern end where now stands the ruins of McCullough's sawmill, which then, and for so many years before, supplied the surrounding country with lumber for many miles. . . Here the two men made arrangements to leave the wagon at a ranch for several months, bought and hired enough pack animals to carry their supplies over the rough mountain trail through and beyond Beasore meadows, and secured two Indian guides to show them the route to the headwaters of the San Joaquin. The man we call Kent told the ranchers he met that he was acquainted with the country in Mono and Inyo counties, had some friends over there he was going to see, and that all he wanted the guides for was to lead him to the pass near Pumice or Mammoth mountain into

Long valley, on Upper Owen's river, for, beyond the pass, he knew the trails. From that point he promised to send back the hired donkeys by the Indians, and for this the wagon and harness left were considered good security. Now, all beyond the matters here stated that was known by the settlers along the line of travel, then or ever since, about these men and their objects, was that the Indians returned in due time with the hired animals, reported that the white men had gone over the mountains, and were well pleased with the trinkets and blankets given them by these men for their services; also, that the men returned in the fall, and made similar successive trips every year till the summer of '77, since which time no one in that wild and sparsely settled region has seen or heard of either of them.

But a late explanation comes from an unexpected source, and is as follows, though no real names have been divulged: Late in the fall of '77, a man somewhat advanced in years fell senseless upon one of the streets of San Francisco, from a stroke of paralysis. He was removed to one of the city's hospitals in a prostrate position, though he lingered for some time, and rallied sufficiently to talk freely to those around him. Previous to his death he called for a father confessor, and among other things, told him in substance what will now be related: Previous to 1869 he had been a prospector and miner in Utah and adjoining territories. Near Salt Lake City he became acquainted with a man known there as Kent, also a miner, but who came only occasionally in summer to Utah, spending much of his time farther East. He did not know exactly in what locality. As their intimacy grew, Kent seemed to take a fancy to him, and one day told him, in strict confidence, that he knew of a good thing in California, where he once mined. Finally in speaking of this matter, Kent said to him that he had some trouble in California several years before, but that so soon as the railroad was finished through to Sacramento, he wished to return, and that if he would go with him, pledge himself to profound secrecy about the work he proposed and its results, and remain faithful to him, he would guarantee the punctual payment, whenever wanted, of a salary of $1,500 a year. This compact between them was made, and they were the two men who came to Stockton in May, 1869, as above described, and made the trip to the upper San Joaquin then and in successive summers. But now comes the startling part of his revelation.

When the Indian guides left them, just beyond the ford of the main San Joaquin, but a mile or so west of Mammoth mountain, they did *not* cross the summit ridge immediately into Mono county. On the contrary, Kent then informed him, that now was the time for profound secrecy and the greatest care; that they were near what he thought was one of the richest gold ledges in California, and it was to find this again and work it that they had come to this mountain wilderness; that he had found it in '61, but the Indian war and later circumstances made it impossible for him to get the benefit of his knowledge; yet, he thought he could readily find it again. Their first care, however, was to put up a rough cabin, to protect their supplies, and to make themselves passably comfortable for the summer. For this purpose, they selected the most secluded spot anywhere near. They found it by following immediately along the base of the main ridge east of the river, turning north from the trail. Following up the eastern bank of a small stream, they crossed a second one just below where it rushed down the mountainside in a pretty cascade over an odd little grotto in the solid rock, a kind of reddish lava. Beyond this and near the base of a small but beautiful lake of blue water nestling in charming seclusion between the main ridge and one of its spurs, they built a roomy cabin. On the low, grassy meadows along the river there was plenty of feed for their animals, and the latter showed no disposition to leave them in their isolated position.

These matters provided for, they cautiously crossed the great divide between them and the headwaters of Owen's river, and, after a little careful searching, Kent finally identified certain landmarks, which he had retained in his memory, and found a reddish ledge, rich in free gold, though not very wide. On this they worked off and on for about two months, spending part of their time hunting deer and catching mountain trout below the falls, ten miles down the river from their camp. In passing we shall mention that the mountain trout of California differ from those farther east chiefly in having black, instead of red specks. In the opinion of the dying man—who, though known by a different name in the hospital, was no doubt identical with the McDougal mentioned above—bullion to the amount of at least $40,000 was taken out by them that summer. This they ran into small bars of about $2,000 each, and distributing it among their different packages, when they moved out, they easily avoided exposing any of the treasure they had thus secured. When they were ready to return to Crane valley, toward the end of September, they carefully covered up with pumice the marks of work they had done on the ledge, and left their few mining tools in a secure place. Arranging with the farmers of Crane valley to take care of the pack animals for eight months, and assuring them they would return the following June, they soon made their way back to Stockton, disposed of their wagon and team, and hastened to San Francisco. Here Kent had his bullion coined at the Mint, paid McDougal the balance of the $1,500 due him for the first twelve months, and transferred the bulk of his coin to Chicago.

They then returned in company to Utah, where McDougal spent the winter, while Kent—promising positively to meet him again the following May, went direct to Chicago—where else McDougal did not then know. Kent was described by his friend as a rather peculiar man, very restless, watchful and silent rather than talkative, though invariably kind and considerate in their intercourse. There seemed always to be an anxious care resting on his mind.

McDougal then told how this secret work was continued by the two year after year, until the summer of '77; how the deep seclusion of their summer camp was never during that time invaded by white men or Indians, because the few who ever passed near it went either along the dim trail south of them or along the main San Joaquin west of them. He positively declared that they took from the ledge each year from $25,000 to $50,000 in gold, he

always faithfully keeping his pledge of secrecy, and Kent increasing his pay to $2,000 for each summer's work. To be sure of this amount, he said, was all he cared for and his wants were few. He was impressed with the fact that Kent never went anywhere east of the great divide between Fresno and Mono counties, except to their ledge and back. Whenever any additional supplies were needed, McDougal, well armed, went by Pumice Gap trail to Benton, forty miles east, or Bishop creek, fifty miles southeast, and got what was wanted.

The pleasant monotony of this work, and its pleasanter results, were varied during only two years. By invitation, he went East with his friend in the fall of '74, visited many Eastern cities, and spent several weeks at Mr. Kent's home. This he found to be on one of the most productive, best stocked and most beautifully improved farms in a western state, within 150 miles of Chicago. There, with a happy wife and family, the man we here call Kent lived the active, independent life of the wealthy farmer; a highly respected and trusted citizen in the community in which he was known. But he persistently avoided notoriety, shunned, rather than sought society and promiscuous crowds, while the keen observation of his true, tried and devoted friend did not fail to detect that same restless caution, and a mental anxiety at times, as if a canker was gnawing at a happiness which otherwise would have seemed complete. Yet, while McDougal felt satisfied that a dark shadow rested on some part of his friend's past life, the fact that he had seen him in his delightful home, a beloved husband and father, honored by a large circle of relatives and friends, made him resolve the more firmly to preserve his fidelity towards him in every way. . . Their summers in the higher Sierras had heretofore passed so quietly, without any disturbance from Indians or other sources, that Mr. Kent concluded to take his family with him to California the following May, that they might enjoy the rough but healthful mountain life, in their wild camp through the summer. He merely charged them most strictly to say nothing to any they met about the object of their visit and its work, merely having it understood that they lived in the country near Chicago and came to California for a few months to see its curious features and to visit friends.

By the middle of June, without accident, the party reached the cabin in its secluded nook. Two plain log shed rooms were added to shelter the family, consisting of a son—a fine, manly fellow about eighteen years old—a beautiful daughter of sixteen, and three younger children, a girl and two boys. . . A favorite place of resort for the rustic sports of the children and an occasional family picnic was along the pretty babbling brook near the very picturesque cascade and grotto already mentioned. These together certainly form one of the choicest gems of nature in one of her own most charming settings. The children proposed to call this Lily grotto, after their oldest sister, who bore their mother's name. But she wanted to name it Pumice grotto, because it is at the western base of Pumice or Mammoth mountain, and because the smooth rock over which the water dashes and in which the grotto is worn is of that pale, brickdust colored lava, of which this vast and lofty

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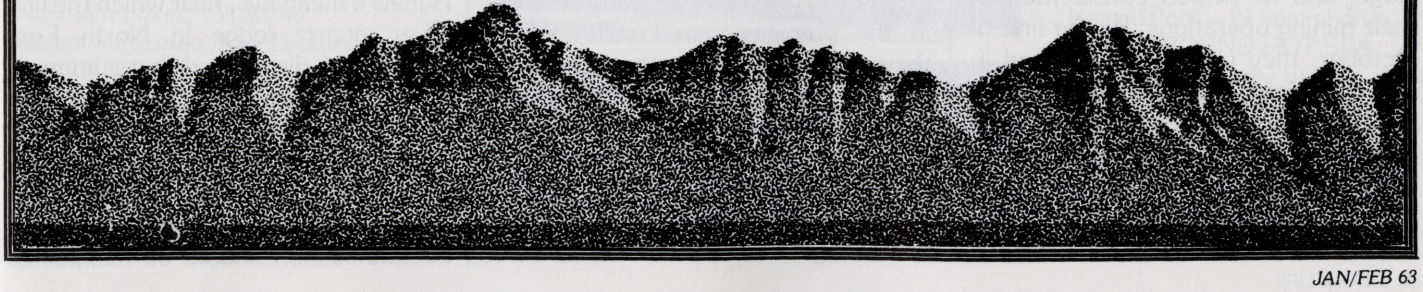

dome is composed. The matter was finally compromised, so that they were christened respectively Pumice cascade and Lily grotto. . . Among the flowers blooming in the middle of July, along the gurgling brook, just below the cascade, were large yellow "evening primroses," orange colored "painted cups," "monkey flowers," light blue lupins, pink geraniums, blue larkspurs, crimson leptosiphons, dandelions, the columbine seen in most of the Sierras, gentians, dwarf thistles with large lilac colored blooms, straw colored Solomon's seals, and large, purple clover, besides the lilies already mentioned, and the pretty flowers of two kinds of wild onions. Of shrubs, currants, the flowering dogwood and dwarf willows were in full bloom. This, remember, is about 8,600 feet above sea level. Here the young folks whiled away many a happy hour, never being allowed to go further from the cabin, unless accompanied by their father or Mr. McDougal and their older brother, each armed with a trusty rifle, for fear that they might meet with bears or unfriendly Indians. They were fortunate, however, to escape all such dangers, though three cinnamon and black bears were killed during the summer, to say nothing of plenty of fine, fat deer. Nothing seemed odder to the young people, or amused them more, than to throw even the largest lumps of pumice into streams without its sinking, as they thought all stones should. Many a time they made the woods ring with their merry laughter as they saw this pumice bobbing up and down on the surface like a fishing cork as it rushed over the rapids. The red and purple gravels of lava and the black, glasslike obsidian pebbles and small bowlders that abound in the larger streams also seemed very curious to them. . .

The usual amount of gold was secured that summer. None of the family but the eldest son ever accompanied the miners to their rich ledge, and he helped considerably in their mining operations. By the first of October, they were safely housed in San Francisco, and after a few weeks' enjoyment of this most European of all American cities, they returned East, McDougal stopping in Utah. In '76 Mr. Kent came West a few weeks later than usual, having visited with his family the

grand Centennial Exposition early in June. They secured the usual amount of gold that summer, but Mr. Kent's household was darkened with sorrow the following winter by the loss of his oldest son.

On their return to Crane valley and their cabin in June, 1877, Mr. Kent seemed very much disturbed by the news of the discovery, the preceding February, of the Alpha, with other silver and quartz ledges near Pine City, and that Mammoth City was being built up by extensive preparations for milling the ore of Mammoth and other mines. Satisfied that the whole country near him would soon swarm with prospectors, he told McDougal that they must hastily secure as much gold as they could from their mine, destroy, as completely as possible, all traces of their work, and leave. He doubted, he said, whether he would ever come back. In accordance with this plan, they had one day thoroughly filled and covered up with pumice all their last openings in the vein, when suddenly they heard distant voices, and looking through an open space among the trees in the pumice-covered valley where they were, they saw several men with pack animals coming towards them from the southeast, and evidently on a prospecting trip. The newcomers were at least half a mile distant, but the echo from the surrounding mountain sides had brought the sounds to their ears. They merely had time to hurriedly pack their horses, and started westward at once across the great divide. In their haste, however, they failed to destroy an old puncheon floor and side pieces, where they had at times piled their crude ore before working it out. . . The next day they sought to destroy every vestige of their cabin and all traces of their settlement there. They tore it down, piled all the logs and puncheons together, burnt and consumed them as completely as possible, threw the ashes in the lake, which they had always known as Mystic lake, and buried deeply under the pumice the small amount of the charcoal remaining. They served in the same way a small bridge they had made across the stream that leads from Mystic lake to the San Joaquin. They immediately moved out, and on their way to (Madeira)—for in their later trips they no longer went as far south as Jones' store—they passed numerous bands of sheep, which in that dry year, were driven through the very region they had just deserted, to what is now called Agnew's meadows, near which the first silver quartz ledge in North Fork district was discovered that summer.

Kent had returned East only about two months before McDougal was stricken down with paralysis, but he had given the latter the strongest pledges, that while he lived communication should be maintained

between them, and that he would always see, that Mc's wants were provided for.

According to McDougal's statement, Kent and he must have taken out between $350,000 and $400,000 from the rich gold bearing ledge, the exact location of which they thus succeeded in keeping so profound a secret. Though the probabilities are against their mine being identical with the original cement mine, it was most likely an extension of the same ledge. In this connection, it is food for thought that within the last two months rich ledges bearing free gold have been found in what is now called the Homer district, twenty-two miles southwest of Bodie, a locality but a short distance from the destroyed camps of the cement hunters.

Now the question arises, who was the man that McDougal had served with a faithful friendship equal to that between David and Jonathan, or Damon and Pithias? *Was this Farnsworth?*

Further investigation alone can answer this question. To the arbitrament of the immediate or remote future we leave all such matters of the now unknown. In (the preceding) you have all that is known about it.

But should he prove to be Farnsworth and be still living, and should the shrewd detectives of our day finally ferret him out, would he pay the just penalty of this barbarous murder of Hume? Or would his wealth, his consequent influence, and the sympathy for his family, save him from a felon's doom, as is too often the case with such influential criminals? □

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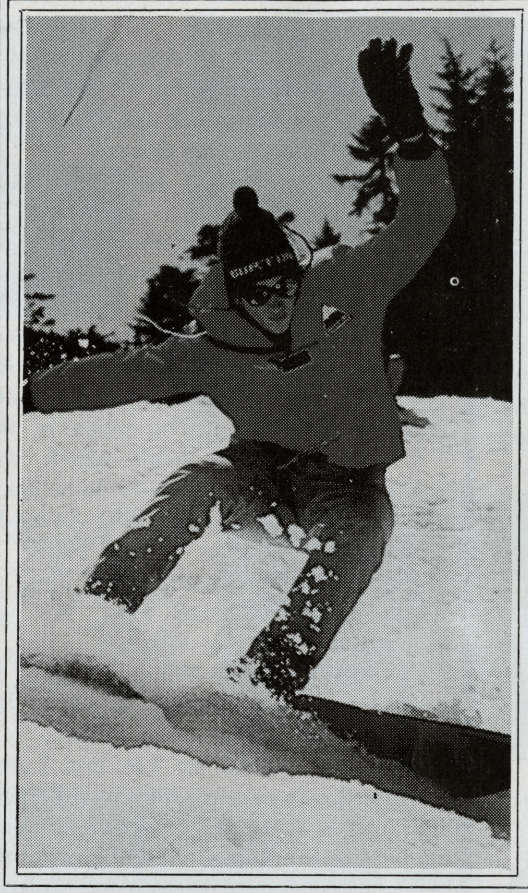

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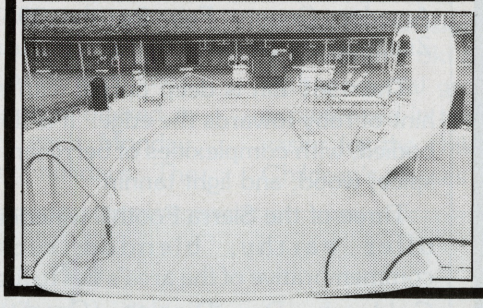

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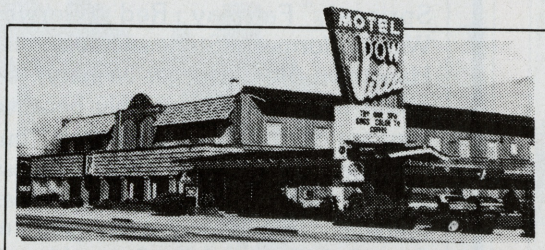

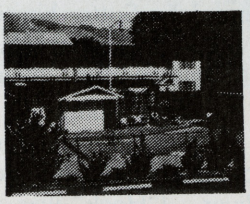

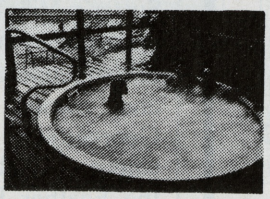

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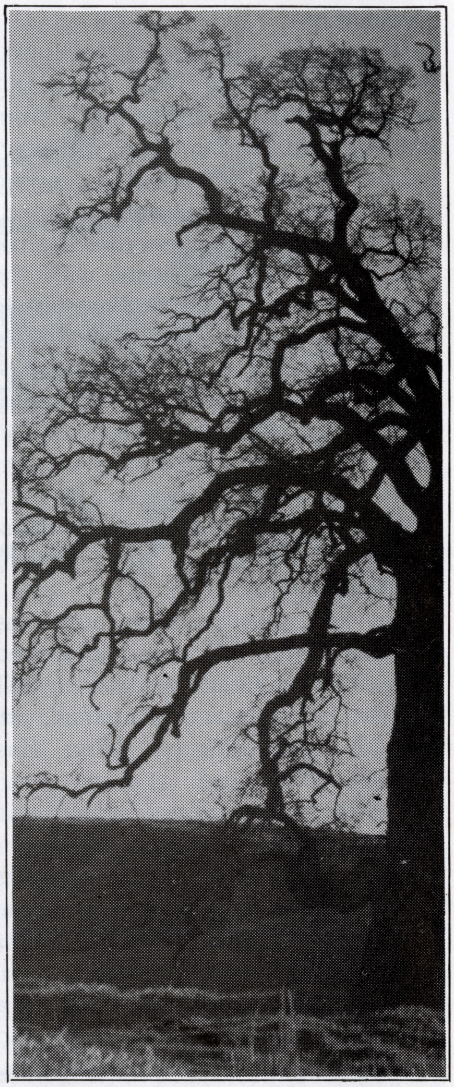
Ben Zeitman of Amador Foothill Winery was a member of the same home-winemaking club as Leon Sobon. He followed the Sobons to the Shenandoah Valley, becoming their next-door neighbor. The Amador Foothill Winery became bonded in 1980. Its 1980 Fiddletown Zinfandel (Eschen Vineyard) is a big Zin with cherry-like aromas, and undertastes of chocolate and spice. This is one to lay down for a few years. It has character and complexity. The vines in the Eschen Vineyard from which this Zinfandel comes are over sixty years old. Amador Foothill 1981 Zinfandel (Amador County) is a blend of Fiddletown and Shenandoah Zins. It can be appreciated now, but will improve somewhat with age.

Granite Springs Winery released its first premium varietal wines in the Spring of 1982. The winery was founded in 1981 by Les and Lynne Russell, whose roots were in the Sierra Foothills, but their careers had taken them to the Bay Area. They sold their dream house and gave up on the dream world to come to El Dorado County. Although their wines have only been recently released to the public, the Russell's Granite Springs varietals have already won several prestigious awards, including a gold medal at the Amador County Fair for the 1981 Zinfandel (El Dorado).

The 1981 Zin is deep purple with a hint of ruby towards the edge. It is full bodied, with complexities of berry-jam. spice, wood, and light tannin.

Three of the Sierra Foothill wineries offer earthy, blended reds commemorative of the area's ties to the Goldrush: Dry Diggins (Granite Springs), Fairplay Red (Gerwer Winery, formerly Stoney Creek), and Hangtown Red (Boeger Winery). I salute these labels, not only because they are death to the "wine snob," but because they call to consciousness something that once was. James Marshal, who discovered gold at Sutter's Mill, and John Sutter himself were active in the early "wine rush." Marshal operated a winery in Coloma and owned vineyards outside of Georgetown, California. Sutter's vineyard was located at Hock Farm on the Feather River. ("Hock" was an

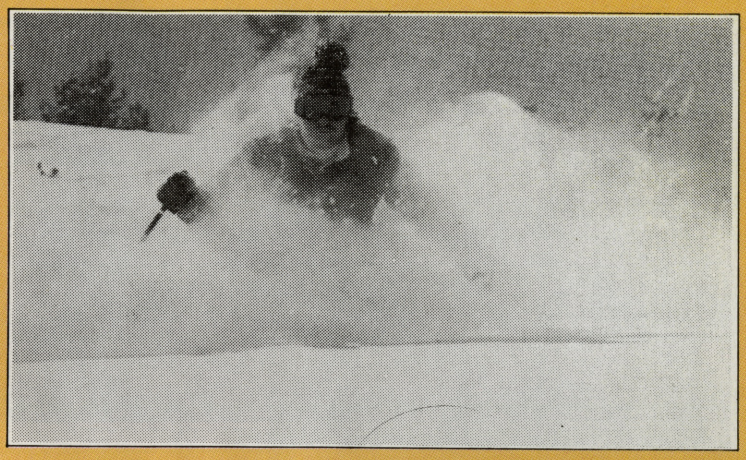


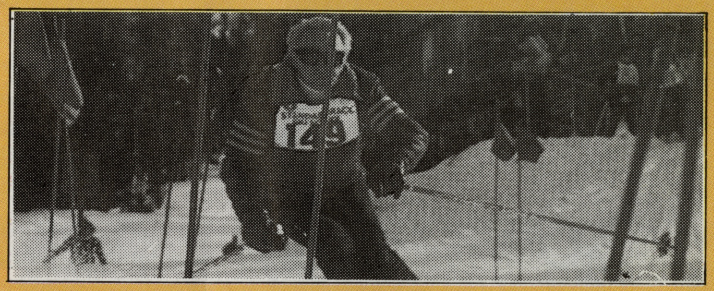
English term for German Riesling). Sutter moved to Hock Farm after losing Sutter's Fort.

Chinese workgangs, who are remembered, albeit obliquely, for building the Central Pacific Railroad and digging mining tunnels, laid stone boundary walls around the vineyards, dug out aging cellars and helped with the harvest. The French, Italians and Serbians, among others who came to work for the hardrock mines, brought with them an appreciation for premium wine and a knowledge of tending the vines. "Cousin Jacks," who came to timber the mines with square-pegged shoring, brought with them an appreciation for aged port and brandy, and a knowledge of advanced cooperage.

When you stalk the Sierra Zin, challenge your palate to taste the foothills' ambiance; it's like finding an old mine. □

MAMMOTH SKI SCHOOL





Among the myriad of services which has made Mammoth Mountain a premiere ski area, one of the most popular is the Mountain's highly regarded Ski School. The school features a variety of programs of instruction to suit any skier's goals and ability.

Mammoth's Ski School is a large one, boasting over two hundred instructors. Lessons are provided out of both the Main Lodge and Warming Hut II.

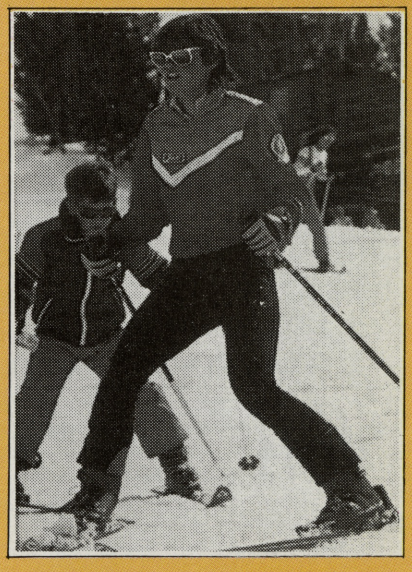
Experienced skiers point out that those best qualified to familiarize people with the sport of skiing are trained professionals like the ones at Mammoth Mountain. The following is a summary of Mammoth's variety of ski school programs:

Private Lessons— Probably the best way for anyone to improve their skiing is through private instruction on a one-to-one basis. Mammoth's professional staff offers private lessons to all levels of skiers. All-day (9:00-4:00) and half-day (9:00-12:00 or 12:30-3:30) sessions are available for up to five people. One hour lessons are also taught at various times.

3-day Beginner Package— This package is offered to adult and children first-timers. It starts each Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, except during holidays. The package price includes three full-day lessons, three days of lift tickets, and three days rental of boots, poles and skis.

Class Lessons— These lessons provide either a full-day or half-day session for any level skier.

Children's Ski School— The children's school is staffed with a special group of professional instructors who are experienced in teaching children ski techniques, making it easier for the children to learn while they are having fun. Children's classes are held in the morning and afternoon.



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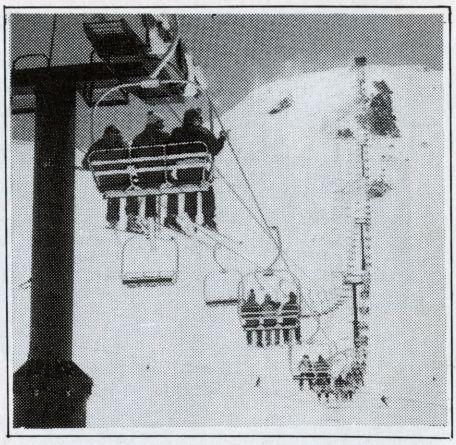

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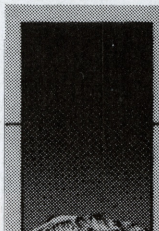
Standard Race— Each Wednesday and Saturday at the Main Lodge, the Ski School sponsors a Standard Race in which anyone, from the snowplower to the advanced skier, may participate. The slalom race is electrically timed, with scoring based on a Ski School forerunner's time. Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals are given as awards. Each morning before the Standard Races, the Ski School offers a special class which includes a morning lesson in ski racing technique.

MAMMOTH



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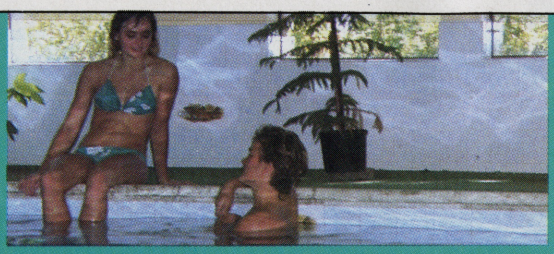

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